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Results-based management in the United Nations in the context of the reform process

Note by the Secretary General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Results-based management in the United Nations in the context of the reform process" (JIU/REP/2006/6).

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RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REFORM PROCESS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination (now CEB)
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (formerly ACC)
CPC	United Nations Committee for Programme and Coordination
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
e-PAS	electronic performance appraisal system
ERP	enterprise resource planning system
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HRM	Human resources management
IMDIS	Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ICT	information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
KIMRS	Key Item Management Reporting System
KM	knowledge management
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MIS	management information system
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OII	Organizational Integrity Initiative
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OPPBA	Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization (Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization)
PAS	performance appraisal system
PKO	peacekeeping operation
RBB	results-based budgeting
RBM	results-based management
SMART	specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

Objectives:

To test the degree of implementation of results-based management (RBM) in the United Nations and to make recommendations on how to adapt the RBM principles, methodology and techniques to the specific needs of the Organization to bring more coherence to the current reform process.

To serve as a management tool for the United Nations Secretariat to enable it to implement more effectively the policy decisions and management practices adopted by the United Nations legislative organs.

Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) has included in its programme of work for 2006 a report entitled "Results-based management in the United Nations in the context of the reform process". The report aims to assess the capability of the United Nations to apply this management strategy with a view to highlighting best practices and identifying challenges and constraints for successfully applying a results-based approach.

2. In 2004, JIU prepared a series of reports on results-based management (RBM) in the United Nations system and developed a benchmarking framework for implementing it. JIU has already applied this framework in the administration and management reviews of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) has recommended its endorsement to the General Assembly. The Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) invited "all UN System organizations to endorse the JIU benchmarking framework for RBM and to use it as the chapeau for their respective implementations of RBM".[1]

3. The General Assembly, by its resolution A/RES/60/257 of 8 May 2006, approved the conclusions and recommendations of CPC as contained in the report on the work of its forty-fifth session. CPC recommended that the General Assembly should, among other things:

> "(a) endorse the benchmarking framework proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit as a tool for the Secretary-General and the oversight bodies and for itself in order to measure the progress towards an effective implementation of results-based management in the United Nations; and [...] (d) request the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations for achieving the benchmarks suggested by the Joint Inspection Unit, in particular benchmarks with regard to accountability and performance management, in working on current management reform initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General and, where appropriate, adopted by the General Assembly, and to report on the implementation thereof."[2]

4. The current report reviews the evolvement of the RBM approach, and highlights and analyses its main elements and components vis-à-vis the RBM benchmarking framework that JIU has developed in its series of reports on that subject.

5. Rational and comprehensive implementation of RBM in the United Nations should bring about tangible improvements in the formulation and implementation of the programmes and activities. It would additionally bring about significant savings. The present external review would therefore seem both timely and crucial in view of the complex process of reform that the United Nations is currently undergoing.

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[1] CEB/2005/HLCM/R.6.

[2] "Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination", Forty-fifth Session, A/60/16, para. 248(d).

Evolution of results-based management in the United Nations

6. The Secretary-General, in the programme for reform that he launched in 1997 (A/51/950), recommended that,

> "the General Assembly review the existing arrangements governing the planning, programming and budgeting process in order to enhance their role in providing strategic direction, establishing better performance yardsticks and reporting and focusing more on accountability for performance than on input accounting - a shift to results-based budgeting".

7. In response to its request for more details of his proposals, the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly detailed reports about results-based budgeting (RBB) in which he sought to clarify the concept and related elements and conditions for its application in the United Nations context:

> "Results-based budgeting, in the form proposed by the Secretary-General for implementation at the United Nations, is a programme budget process in which: (a) programme formulation revolves around a set of predefined objectives and expected results; (b) expected results would justify resource requirements which are derived from and linked to the outputs required to achieve such results; and (c) actual performance in achieving results is measured by objective performance indicators".[3]

8. The Secretary-General also sees RBB as a tool to enhance accountability and improve strategic management requiring mechanisms for accountability (improved performance assessment and a more responsive system of management authority and responsibility, including PAS), adjustments to information systems and enhancement of staff knowledge and skills, not just programme managers, to incorporate RBB concepts and tools in their work.

9. In its resolution 55/231 of 23 December 2000, the General Assembly approved the shift to RBB based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The Assembly noted that:

> "the measures proposed by the Secretary-General and recommended by the Advisory Committee are intended to provide, in essence, a management tool that should enhance responsibility and accountability in the implementation of programmes and budgets."

It decided that these measures should be introduced in a gradual and incremental manner. RBB was first applied for the biennium 2002-2003.

10. The budget document, with its new format, made a commitment to looking beyond the delivery of outputs. It expanded the programmatic aspects and formulated them more logically. It also added indicators of achievement. It committed the Organization to achieving results collectively. In addition, the General Assembly requested the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to prepare an evaluation of the implementation of all provisions of resolution 55/231 on RBB (resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, para. 153).

11. The evaluation, which was completed at the end of 2002, identified several challenges and the steps needed "to bring the implementation of result-based budgeting to the next level".[4] Among the challenges were the:

- shift in focus from input/output to results orientation required a significant culture change in the Organization that is still ongoing;
- length and complexity of the budgetary process and need to adapt its components to the results paradigm;

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[3] "Results-based budgeting", Report of the Secretary-General, A/53/500, 15 October 1998.
[4] "Implementation of all provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/321 on results-based budgeting", A/57/474, 15 October 2002.

- inherent difficulties in quantifying many of the expected achievements of the Organization[5];
- need for staff at all levels to become familiar with the concepts and terms of results-based budgeting.

12. The evaluation also emphasized the need for the following:

- clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of programme managers, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA) and OIOS vis-à-vis the results-based paradigm;
- self-evaluation and self-monitoring by programme managers to become part of the management culture and practice;
- enhanced information systems, specifically the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS);
- better linkage between evaluation and planning;
- clearer guidelines to be provided to programme managers;
- ownership by programme managers of the objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement of their programmes.

13. As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 55/231, the Secretariat has made efforts to continuously improve the formulation of objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. Training was provided to programme managers to reinforce the fundamentals of results-based budgeting, including the logical framework, and to assist them in developing data-collection methodologies. The training stressed that the expected accomplishments or results provide a critical linkage to the broad objectives of programmes and the implementation process. The training manual explained that the practical benefits of results-based management allow the effectiveness and continued relevance of activities to be determined and feedback to be provided to programmes for future action. The results-based approach encourages effective programmes; and allows progress towards final objectives to be clearly identified.

14. The longer-term objective was to include RBM training into the standard training programmes that the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) will be offering in the coming years. This was seen as being essential to developing a results-based culture in the organization. In addition, OPPBA established a website to assist programme managers and staff in implementing results-based budgeting, including the preparation of the logic model for the 2004-2005 budget period.[6]

15. In resolution 55/231, the General Assembly emphasized the need for the Secretariat to continue to improve programme evaluation capacities in a manner complementary to the existing evaluation systems. OIOS noted further that the global capacity of departments and offices for conducting evaluations had declined over the years.[7] The report of the Secretary-General on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" also called for a strengthened system of evaluation and monitoring that would better measure the impact of the Organization's work.

Different definitions of results-based management

16. In their review of the status of implementation of RBM in the United Nations system in 2004, the Inspectors were faced with different definitions and terms being used by different organizations or bodies:

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[5] In its resolution 55/231, the General Assembly recognized the difficulty of achieving the results of complex and long-standing political activities within specific time frames.

[6] http://ppbd.un.org/rbb

[7] "Strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives", A/57/68, 23 April 2002.

- "Results-based management" United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP);
- "Results-based programme planning and management" United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);
- "Results-based budgeting" United Nations Secretariat;
- "Results-based programming, management and monitoring" United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- "Strategic budgeting" International Labour Organization (ILO).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) implements the approach through a set of conceptual and procedural advances (Strategic Framework, New Programme Model, enhanced monitoring and evaluation regime), rarely referring explicitly to results-based management. The Inspectors found that within the United Nations it was unclear whether the Organization was implementing either RBB or RBM. For example, in a recent report mandated by the General Assembly on the implementation of RBB in the peacekeeping operations (PKOs), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) informed the Inspectors that it is implementing only RBB. Moreover, while one high-level United Nations official interviewed by the Inspectors affirmed that the United Nations is only implementing RBB, another one indicated the contrary. And their supervisor said that the Organization was implementing neither RBB nor RBM.

17. Under the circumstances, the Inspectors were guided by the assumption that the United Nations is in the process of moving from RBB to RBM. Thus, tangible achievements cannot be expected in the areas of human resources management (HRM) and management information system (MIS), the other two RBM pillars.

Fragmented approach

18. At the United Nations and most of its specialized agencies, the Inspectors found the approach to RBM to be fragmented rather than coherent and holistic. It focused largely on budgeting and programming aspects, and failed to take into account or emphasize at the outset the scope of changes required in other management areas for the new system to work. In some instances, the shift was mainly in the vision and format rather than in the methods of work or support by the administrative, financial and information systems in the Organization. The process became mainly a "learning-by-doing" exercise.

Results-based management and the United Nations reform

19. By its resolution 57/300, the General Assembly welcomed the efforts and initiatives of the Secretary-General aimed at further reforming the United Nations to cope with contemporary challenges and address new priorities facing the Organization in the twenty-first century. His report "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" set out a number of improvements aimed at ensuring that the Organization devotes its attention to addressing the priorities fixed by Member States and to ensuring that the Secretariat, in so doing, provides more responsive and efficient service.[8] It also defined a number of areas that needed to be strengthened, together with the corresponding steps that would need to be taken. It identified 36 such actions.

20. The Secretary-General reminded departments and offices of his commitment to reflecting in the budget proposals for 2004-2005 the new priorities established by Member States in the Millennium Declaration. While the achievement of certain goals and many of these reforms efforts are still "work-in-progress", the Secretary-General has launched further reform proposals. The Inspectors find no evidence

[8] A/57/387.

of comprehensive evaluation exercises to assess the impact of reform measures already taken or still under way.

21. In his report "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide", The Secretary-General pointed out that "Previous reform efforts, while generating some significant improvements, have sometimes addressed the symptoms rather than the causes of the Organization's weaknesses, and have failed to adequately address new needs and requirements."[9] In the same report he further stated:

> "There have been many efforts at reform. I myself have introduced two main sets of reform proposals during my time in office — one in 1997 (see A/51/950) and a second in 2002 (see A/57/387) — as well as the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (see A/55/305-S/2000/809), issued in 2000, and the report on a strengthened and unified security management system (see A/59/365), issued in 2004"[10].

22. Referring to these earlier reform efforts, he said that they were:

> "not sufficiently comprehensive and strategic to meet the demands of an era of such rapid change. In several key areas — notably the management of human resources, the basic structures of management itself, the mechanisms of intergovernmental control and perhaps above all the management culture — the operating model has *not* changed significantly since at least the 1970s".[11]

23. In the opinion of the Inspectors, one key factor that has severely undermined the reform process since the first major one initiated in 1986 with the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 41/213, is that the implementation and impact of the successive reform initiatives had not been sufficiently evaluated either by the Secretariat or by the Member States before new ones were launched. The Secretariat, in its comments on the current report, stated the following:

> "one of the reasons for insufficient evaluation of reform impact is that the reform measures have moved forward without resources being dedicated to drive through the change. In both the 2002 and 2006 packages, the Secretary-General requested a 'change management' capacity to be created to effect change from the top, monitor impact, and to provide feed back. This was not approved."

The proclaimed principle that the reform is not an event, but a process, has probably been misinterpreted. A meaningful reform process should be seen as a long-term exercise, where each of its components should be carefully thought out, designed, integrated and crafted in a logical framework.

24. The latest reform proposals, as set out in the Secretary-General's report "Investing in the United Nations", bring a new set of good intentions, which supersede some previous initiatives. Although the report contains many well-thought-out proposed courses of action, it lacks intrinsic coherence and a clear "specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound" (SMART) road map for implementation. It also lacks an accountability commitment and assurances of transparency. Even though it expressly states that the various elements of the reform process are interdependent, the Inspectors could find neither information on phased implementation nor any evidence of the interdependency of the different initiatives; both of which, in their view, would be essential for smooth and coordinated implementation. To take one example, they believe that the reform of the internal system of administration of justice should precede other initiatives such as the reform of contractual arrangements. And the latter should precede the implementation of further phases of the current mobility policy. All of these initiatives have nonetheless been launched in parallel and without any coordination.

25. The JIU benchmarking framework for RBM, which has been endorsed by CPC and approved by the General Assembly, could be used by the Secretariat to determine the order of implementation of the different current reform initiatives and to draw up a reform road map that integrates the reform efforts in a coherent manner.

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[9] A/60/692.
[10] Ibid., para.8.
[11] Ibid., para. 9.

Lack of coordination

26. As a result of this lack of coordination, Member States are continuously being asked to review successive, superseding, and disconnected reform proposals contained in too many Secretariat documents. It is unrealistic to expect even the most numerous and well-equipped delegation in the United Nations to be able to read and digest such an amount of information. The Inspectors therefore pose the question: how can Member States seriously be expected to properly negotiate and arrive at consensual decisions?

27. The following are some of the numerous parallel and disconnected reviews under way:

- Review Panel on Governance and Oversight;
- Panel on Administration of Justice;
- Report on the strengthening of OIOS;
- Reports requested in General Assembly resolution 60/260;
- Comprehensive report on human resources management, expected for the 61st General Assembly Regular Session.

28. The issue has led to dissatisfaction and mistrust among certain Member States and consensus has been broken owing to reform proposals not being implemented according to the agreed terms (e.g. high-level posts, posts "owned" by given countries, no respect for resolutions, financial leverage on reform initiatives, etc.). [12]

29. The Secretary-General has cautioned that:

> "...strong management can only work if it responds to strong governance. These reforms are in danger of failing unless there is a trusting relationship, a strategic partnership, between this institution's governance — the Member States' intergovernmental mechanisms — and its management, namely myself and my colleagues". [13]

Furthermore, he specifically points to this issue as one of the main reasons why future reform efforts might possibly fail:

> "Two developments threaten this partnership, and must be resolved. First, many States have cause to feel excluded from any real say in the affairs of the Organization and are driven to assert their influence by using the only means they believe is available to them — that is, by withholding their support from some of the many decisions, particularly on administrative and budgetary matters, for which consensus is required. This puts them at loggerheads with other States who feel, on the contrary, that their financial contribution entitles them to a decisive say on these same issues. This dispute is undermining what should be a common commitment to an effective United Nations."[14]

30. The 2006-2007 biennium is the third in which the results-based approach is being applied. As an example of progress that has been made, objectives, expected accomplishments, targets and other elements of the results framework have already been refined and are now, in general, more realistic and reflective of the activities undertaken. RBM is a process of which learning is part. However, there are many challenges ahead and it is still a long way from a holistic implementation of RBM. The challenges and issues yet to be overcome are set out in the following paragraphs, where an analysis has been made of the current status of implementation, taking as a starting point the JIU RBM benchmarking framework.

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[12] For example, see General Assembly resolution 41/213.
[13] A/60/692, para.14.
[14] Ibid. para. 15.

Recommendation 1

The General Assembly may wish to establish a golden rule whereby new reports on the same reform or management processes should be accompanied by an evaluation of the implementation and impact of previous processes.

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STATUS VERSUS THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT RESULTS-BASED-MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

I. FROM THE PLANNING TO THE EVALUATION AND REPORTING CYCLE

Benchmark 1 **"A clear conceptual framework for RBM exists as a broad management strategy"**

31. Although a logical results-based framework has been developed for its application in budgeting, no holistic-results approach exists within the Secretariat. A comprehensive RBM strategy should include the three pillars that support the results-based approach:

- the planning-programming-budgeting-monitoring-evaluation-reporting cycle
- the necessary HRM-related policies
- the supporting information-management systems for full implementation of RBM.

RBM terminology is not commonly used or widely accepted, which in itself is evidence of a weak conceptualization of RBM across the Secretariat. For instance, JIU has recently conducted an evaluation of RBB in peacekeeping operations. In its comments on the JIU report, DPKO confirmed that it had been mandated to implement RBB but not RBM. The Inspectors would like to highlight the confusion in the Secretariat between the two terms, RBB and RBM. Furthermore, they see no point in "budgeting for results" if there is no subsequent action to achieve those results. This is but one example of the lack of a broad management strategy to implement RBM, which as a first step should promote the understanding and conceptualization of the results approach among management and staff at large. There is therefore a need to "manage for results".

32. The lack of a Secretariat-wide implementation strategy does not mean that in certain areas the results approach adopted does not go beyond what could be considered pure RBB. However, no comprehensive, coherent and time-bound strategy exists. But despite being mostly very general in nature, the reform process proposed by the Secretary-General in his "Investing in the United Nations" report is in fact convergent with RBM.

Recommendation 2

As the way to bring coherence to the current reform process, the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to frame his reform proposals within the context of the approved benchmarking framework for the implementation of RBM in the United Nations.

Recommendation 3

The Secretary-General should, with immediate effect, develop an RBM corporate conceptual framework and a time-bound implementation strategy or road map for consideration and approval by the General Assembly. In so doing, the Secretary-General should refer to the approved benchmarking framework for RBM with a view to promoting a common understanding of RBM; providing clear definitions of RBM concepts and techniques; harmonizing RBM tools and terminology within the organization; adapting RBM to the business and operations of the organization at all levels and emphasizing the implications and requirements of such an adaptation.

Benchmark 2 **"The respective responsibilities of the Organization's main parties are clearly defined"**

33. Division of work and responsibilities is one of the most important benchmarks in the RBM implementation, and the lack of trust between the Member States and the Secretary-General or the Secretariat is perhaps one of the main problems in the Organization. It appears that the main source of mistrust between certain Member States and the Secretariat is the perception of a biased implementation of the mandated activities.

34. The lack of trust is also reflected in the division of responsibilities between the Secretariat and Member States and further confirmed by the recent decision of the General Assembly to give the Member States direct access to OIOS reports. With regard to RBM, JIU has recommended that the responsibilities of the Organization's main parties should be clearly defined as follows:[15]

> *"(a)* Member States, through the legislative organs, should focus primarily on setting clear, measurable, and time-bound goals, objectives, and targets for the organization, identifying the responsibilities of the secretariat in attaining the organization's goals and objectives vis-à-vis the responsibilities of other parties, in particular their own responsibilities; monitoring the organization's progress towards those goals and objectives by focusing on results, thus refraining from micromanagement and insisting, instead, on accountability for results; providing resources commensurate with the approved programmes, and/or giving clear guidance on programme and resource allocation priorities where sufficient resources cannot be provided;
>
> *"(b)* Secretariats should satisfy the Member States that the established goals and objectives are translated into effective programmes and activities that contribute to or ensure their achievements, and that resources are used efficiently for those purposes, fully respecting the mandates and priorities established by Member States; promote a sense of ownership and accountability among managers and staff, including by fully involving programme managers in the decision-making process of their respective programmes; promote also an environment of trust among parties, including through transparency and consultations with Member States; and provide at timely intervals, through defined tools, clear assessments of the organization's performance; and
>
> *"(c)* Oversight bodies, both internal and external, should, while observing their respective mandates, satisfy the Member States that the secretariats are discharging their responsibilities in the most effective and efficient manner; and advise and guide the secretariats in their efforts towards greater efficiency, as appropriate."

35. Referring to the need to create and ensure a trusting relationship, "a strategic partnership", between the governance and the management of the United Nations, the Secretary-General stated that:

> "[…] this conflict has broken down the division of labour between myself, as Chief Administrative Officer, and Member States. It has led to intervention in almost every decision about the allocation of financial and human resources. It is vital that we find — or rediscover — a basis for partnership. Effective oversight and ability to set the Organization's direction must be restored to Member States, while the right of the Secretary-General to manage the affairs of the Organization in a manner that delivers the goals set for him by Member States must be respected."[16]

36. Examples of an improper application of a results-based approach within the Secretariat are many:

- artificial ceiling for the budget when resources should be commensurate with the expected results to be achieved;
- withholding of the annual budget when resources should be linked to the achievement of long-term objectives;
- political appointments without enough consideration for managerial skills and qualifications;
- the fact that the Secretariat is always overstretched with requests to "do more with less" and take up additional mandates "within existing financial resources";
- micro-management.

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[15] JIU/REP/2004/5, para. 16.
[16] A/60/692, para. 16.

Recommendation 4

In developing the above-mentioned corporate conceptual framework, the Secretary-General should elaborate on concrete proposals and related transparency and accountability commitments for a fair division of labour between the legislative organs, the Secretariat and the oversight bodies.

Benchmark 3 **"Long-term objectives have been clearly formulated for the Organization"**

37. The Millennium Declaration established the goals to be achieved in the near future, which should serve, in RBM terms, as the strategic framework for the operations of the United Nations system for that period. These goals are mostly of a general nature, whereas in an RBM approach, the objectives should be SMART[17]. Moreover, although some meet some of the SMART criteria, they lack some of the attributes of fully SMART objectives. Objectives should be clearly formulated and attainable. Although the United Nations itself can certainly contribute to achieving the goals, it cannot achieve them by itself. Thus these cannot be considered as long-term objectives for the Organization. The success or failure of many programmes, in particular in the development field, cannot therefore be attributed to the United Nations alone, but rather to the entire United Nations system and the international community, including the Member States themselves.

38. Despite the fact that deadlines such as 2015 or 2020 were set for these goals, this has not been followed in defining and assigning responsibilities among the parties involved (e.g. United Nations and its funds and programmes, specialized agencies, Bretton Woods institutions, Governments). Neither are there any long-term plans in place with clear deadlines associated with achievement of the goals. In fact the United Nations has no such long-term planning mechanisms at all. Moreover, financial resources have not been forecasted accordingly for the achievement of such ambitious goals. For instance, the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005, the first one prepared after the Millennium Declaration, indicated that the level of resources in the approved programme budget outline provided an increase in real resources of just 0.5 per cent. In RBM, long-term objectives need to be followed by long-term planning, including the indication of the associated and commensurate level of resources, and subsequent programming into shorter implementation periods with appropriation of resources, monitoring and evaluation. This process has not been followed.

39. Another major methodological shortfall in the implementation of RBM is that the objectives set at the top of the Organization are not linked to those at lower levels. Superior levels should indicate to the lower ones what the objectives should be. The lower level should then determine and justify the resources it requires for achieving these. After a negotiation process, objectives and commensurate resources should be agreed. This process needs to be repeated between successive organizational levels and finally consolidated at the top. At each level, the objectives should be SMART so that performance can be measured.

40. Another main obstacle to the RBM approach is the lack of integration within the United Nations Secretariat and its funds and programmes. Therefore, the integration of the entire United Nations system for development, and the attribution of responsibilities, should become an urgent priority. In this respect, the authority of the Economic and Social Council, CPC, ACABQ and CEB in their respective mandated coordinating roles should be reconfirmed, reinforced and duly exercised.

41. Already in 1997, the Secretary-General had stressed that:

> "A new system-wide culture must emerge, based on systematic policy consultations, effective decentralization, full respect of each other's mandates and competencies, and a common appreciation of the

[17] SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

challenges ahead and of the respective strengths of the various organizations of the system in meeting them."[18]

42. In a 1999 report, JIU carried out a review of the efforts of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), later renamed CEB, "to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of inter-agency coordination, and to enhance the interaction of ACC with intergovernmental bodies, particularly with the Economic and Social Council". The report stated that:

> "while coordination was the *raison d'être* of ACC from its inception, it is also a shared responsibility between Member States and the executive heads of the secretariats of the organizations. Member States in the different organizations or even in different forums within the same organization have sometimes given mandates or approved programmes which were overlapping, if not conflicting with existing ones. For their part, executive heads, in some cases, and without prior consultations with other concerned organizations, have taken initiatives or made proposals to their governing bodies which had system-wide implications."[19]

43. The same report includes the guiding principles that had been defined for the functioning of ACC, namely:

> "(a) The leadership role of the Secretary-General who, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, and through appropriate consultations with concerned agencies, submits for discussion by ACC any programme or proposal of system-wide nature, and informs the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly accordingly;
>
> "(b) the commitment by all members to carry out the necessary consultations within the framework of ACC when launching on their own initiative any operation requiring contributions from other members of ACC;
>
> "(c) the undertaking by executive heads of the agencies to convey to their respective governing bodies major initiatives within the United Nations system of particular relevance to their organizations."[20]

44. JIU recognized that some initiatives, in line with the guiding principles agreed upon by ACC, had brought about a better sense of leadership and ownership among ACC members. In Recommendation A1.2 in the same report, it called on ACC to demonstrate the relevance and impact of its work by:

> "Developing policy-oriented and forward-looking agendas which contribute to strengthen[ing] the system's capacity for forward planning and strategic thinking and its ability to respond rapidly and adequately to major international developments;
>
> "Ensuring that, where appropriate, the outcomes of its meetings and those of its subsidiary bodies are more action-oriented and underline activities for which secretariats themselves are accountable for implementation, and other issues requiring guidance or action from governing bodies."

45. While recognizing that efforts have been made, the Inspectors are of the opinion that there still remains much room for improvement in system-wide cooperation and coordination. They find it timely for the Member States to give clear directives to CEB with a view to adapting itself to the new challenges, priorities and requirements of international cooperation.

46. The Inspectors consider that the above-mentioned guiding principles should be reviewed with a view to transforming them into a binding institutional framework for cooperation, which sets out the following:

- the doctrine that guides them in the coordination and cooperation efforts;

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[18] "Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1996", E/1997/54, page 5.
[19] JIU/REP/99/1, para.5 (A/54/288).
[20] Ibid., para 20.

- the rules of engagement and guidelines for each participating organization which, while preserving their operational independence spell out their commitments, responsibilities and accountability as well as the division of labour for cooperation and coordination;
- a clear, verifiable road map to move the United Nations system towards new coherent cooperation.

47. In its report entitled "Evaluation of results-based budgeting in peace-keeping operations"[21], JIU elaborated on the main constraints the United Nations faces in its integration efforts and recommended a course of action. The Inspectors would like to extend this recommendation to the whole cooperation for development both in the field and at Headquarters:

Recommendation 5

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of CEB, should discuss the preparation of an institutional framework within the Board, proposing the operational doctrine, the rules of engagement, the guidelines and a road map for the United Nations system involvement in cooperation for development, to be submitted for consideration and approval by the respective legislative organs of the United Nations system organizations

Benchmark 4 **"The Organization's programmes are well aligned with its long-term objectives"**

48. The programmes constitute the vehicle through which organizations pursue their long-term goals, objectives and targets. They therefore need to be well aligned with the organization's goals and objectives. This requires, for instance:

- clearly defining the cascade of objectives at each level of an organization's programme structure;
- ensuring that objectives are logically consistent among levels, reflecting cause-effect linkages;
- regrouping and reformulating programmes to better focus the work on the long-term objectives, thereby avoiding a strategic disconnection in programme planning, and adapting RBM tools and approaches to the specificities of various operational entities.

49. Given that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be considered as long-term objectives for the United Nations for the reasons indicated above, it cannot be affirmed that the Organization's programmes are well aligned with its long-term objectives. Programmes follow a fragmented approach and do not form part of a coordinated common effort to achieve the Organization's overall objectives.

Benchmark 5 **"The Organization's resources are well aligned with its long-term objectives"**

50. A fundamental issue in a results-based approach is the determination of resource requirements. Discussions on these requirements must follow the legislative decisions on expected results. The United Nations has no mechanism for linking objectives and resources, whether long or short term. Resources are allocated on a biennial basis, with budget outlines and proposals prepared de facto on a zero real-growth basis, without there being any legislative decision in this regard.

51. Objectives and expected accomplishments, as well as performance and actual results, have no impact on resource allocation. This was recognized in the report of the Secretary-General "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change":

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[21] JIU/REP/2006/1 (A/60/709).

> "The current system leads to a strategic disconnection between the main instruments of programme planning, embodied in the medium-term plan, and resource allocation, which takes the form of the budget outline and the proposed programme budget. The Organization's medium-term plan and its budget cover different time frames and are considered by separate bodies on different occasions. Not surprisingly, there is little coherence between these disparate planning and budgeting exercises, and decisions on institutional priorities are made in isolation from decisions on the use of scarce resources.
>
> "The existing systems for reporting and evaluating the performance of programmes have no practical impact on future plans and resource allocation decisions. At the end of each biennium, the status of completion of more than 36,000 outputs is collated in a programme performance report, the contents of which are simply noted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination."[22]

52. Despite some changes in the budgeting process, this core problem has not changed much. A disconnection persists between the planned objectives and the allocated resources. Future evolution of the current results-based approach within the Secretariat would imply linking the planned and actual results to resource allocation. Introducing RBB in the Secretariat has not substantially changed the way in which the budget is prepared, it has only added a new part to the process - the results framework. Proposals for resources continue to be made following the "old style", and with no clear link to expected accomplishments. This was confirmed by the Secretary-General in his report "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide", when he proposed that:

> "The budget and planning process be explicitly linked to the results of performance, work planning and the assessment of managerial performance in order to ensure the effective stewardship of resources provided by Member States."[23]

Recommendation 6

To streamline the planning, programming and budgetary cycle and to facilitate supervision by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General should present for consideration and approval by the General Assembly:

(a) a long-term planning instrument of a minimum of ten years
- **that identifies those agreed goals related to the United Nations mission and mandate, as well as the objectives that would contribute to attaining such goals, and**
- **that provides an overall forecast of the resource requirements for information purposes;**

(b) medium-term programmes for the first phase of implementation of the long-term plan, with estimates, for information purposes, of the overall resources required for the period, both from the regular budget and extrabudgetary;

(c) a biennial operational "rolling" budget to appropriate resources linked to specific activities (expected results);

(d) a single annual performance accountability report on programme implementation, which would facilitate the annual reviews to be conducted by the General Assembly to adjust the biennial budget and adapt it to new mandates and requirements.

Recommendation 7

In the light of the new RBM approach and after 20 years of experience in the implementation of the budgetary process adopted through its resolution 41/213, the General Assembly may wish to revisit the current budgetary process on the basis of the Secretary-General's submission proposed in recommendation 6.

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[22] A/57/387, paras. 161 and 164.
[23] A/60/692, proposal 18.

Benchmark 6 "An effective performance monitoring system is in place"

53. Some progress has been made in this regard. In particular, efforts have been made to refine the quality and significance of expected accomplishments, outcomes and all the elements, in general, of the results framework. Improvements have also been made in data collection. OPPBA conducted training workshops for programme managers specifically in data collection methods for measuring results in 2002. Subsequent budget-preparation exercises have helped programme managers, with the support of OPPBA, to use different types of performance indicators, and in some cases baselines are being established. In 2003 OIOS organized training workshops on analysing and reporting programme performance information in a results-based framework for the entire Secretariat (36 workshops with 688 participants and 111 "clinics" with 656 participants). Additionally, OIOS provided 770 participants with training during the 2004 - 2005 biennium.

54. Monitoring is a systematic activity undertaken by managers. It should allow them to detect deviations in time and take corrective action as necessary. For this purpose, they need rules and tools. The "Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation"[24] are a good set of instructions but they are not matched by their implementation. The monitoring tools available are also inadequate; in particular, performance at the subprogramme level, which is monitored through the use of IMDIS.

Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System

55. IMDIS is the main system used to collect performance information. It is an Internet-based system for organizing and storing data on performance. It was used for preparing the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. However, it was not originally conceived as a tool to support the implementation of a results approach. Nor was it intended to form part of an integrated system designed to take into consideration the needs of the Organization with regard to the future implementation of a results approach. IMDIS was developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) to assist its senior management in tracking the implementation of programme outputs and in meeting the performance reporting requirements of the General Assembly. Expanded in 1999 and 2000 to cover the output delivery of other departments, it was subsequently used by OIOS in preparing the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1998-1999.[25] It was also used for programme performance reporting for the 2000-2001 biennium and for preparing the results-based part of the programme budget for 2002-2003 and subsequent biennia.

56. At the request of OPPBA, DESA further expanded it in 2000 to include all programme components of all sections of the programme budget for 2002-2003. Thus, the full database now consists of all the objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each subprogramme directly linked to the related outputs. IMDIS was used from the start of the budget preparation process to capture departmental programmatic content. The information was then extracted from the system and incorporated into the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. Following the adoption of the programme budget, changes adopted by the General Assembly are also entered into IMDIS to provide an up-to-date database of the approved programme.

57. In the biennium 2002-2003, departments started using IMDIS to enter information on progress made towards expected accomplishments and towards completion of the scheduled outputs. Ideally, information is entered as soon as it becomes available. Departments have been requested to enter and update data at least three times during the biennium: at the end of the first year, 18 months into the biennium and at the end of the biennium. It can thus be used as an ongoing monitoring and management tool for programme managers. IMDIS is limited in the sense that it relies on departments to input accurate and relevant data. It does not obviate the need for the development of appropriate data-

[24] ST/SGB/2000/8, 19 April 2000.
[25] A/55/73.

collection methods or for the proper analysis of the collected data. The need for data to be entered in a structured and regular manner has been one of the major problems faced by different organizations in the past when implementing this type of decentralized data input system. The Secretariat is no exception in this respect.

58. Initially, there was no intention of linking IMDIS with the other information systems currently in place. OIOS has ascertained that additional enhancements to IMDIS are needed to capture information on data collection for measuring results and to link IMDIS to other budgetary and financial systems. These enhancements were discussed by DESA, OPPBA and OIOS in order to take all needs into account. Several of the enhancements have already been made to facilitate monitoring the programme budget. However, the future development of the system is currently stopped in the light of the Secretary-General's proposal as mentioned in paragraph 65 below.

59. The Inspectors ascertained that IMDIS does not satisfy the needs of many of its users; nor is it being used across the entire Secretariat. DPKO, for instance, uses instead a set of Microsoft Office (Excel and Word) elements, which are pending replacement by a new application. This is yet another example of the fragmented approach to the use of information management systems in the Secretariat.

Key Item Management Reporting System

60. The Key Item Management Reporting System (KIMRS) provides analytical information on key performance indicators to facilitate decision-making processes. The system uses the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) as its source of data, in addition to other information systems. It is web based and provides real-time data, and management-level information on compliance with established goals. It is designed around areas of critical importance to programme managers. These areas, called "key items", include regular budgetary and extrabudgetary expenditure, vacancy management, implementation of oversight body recommendations, and achieving and maintaining proper gender balance and geographical distribution among staff.

61. KIMRS uses colour-coded indicators, updated daily on the Intranet, to highlight where management action needs to be taken. For instance, a red indicator light on recruitment tracking clearly alerts the manager to delays in the recruitment process. Conversely, a green light on the gender balance page would indicate that the department has reached the Organization-wide goal of a 50/50 gender balance. The indicators are based on a comparison of actual performance against plans, targets and benchmarks. Managers can also investigate problem areas as the system allows "drilling down" to more detailed levels of information. The report option in KIMRS includes graphic trend analysis, which tells the management story at a glance.

62. Effective performance monitoring systems should be backed up by the use of information technologies. This is an area of concern as there is no global information technology strategy. The Secretary-General has proposed the creation of the post of Chief Information Technology Officer, at the level of Assistant Secretary-General. Responsibilities of the post will include defining and implementing a comprehensive information management strategy for the entire Secretariat. Additionally and subject to the final results of soon-to-be-completed feasibility studies, the Secretary-General also proposes to replace IMIS, Galaxy and other stand-alone information and communication technology (ICT) management support systems with a fully integrated global system by 2009.

63. ACABQ stressed that the detailed report to be presented in May 2007 should include an assessment of previous investments and take into account problems being experienced by both the Information Technology Services Division and the Communications and Information Technology Service, as well as the experience of the United Nations system with recent technological innovation programmes. The report should also include details of the expected time frame for introducing the system and of the arrangements for continuing the present systems during the transitional period.

64. The information system at the core of the administrative structure and workflows is IMIS. It supports personnel, finance, payroll, procurement, travel and related administrative functions. It will continue to play a pre-eminent role in the administrative processes of the Secretariat for at least the next five years. In addition to IMIS, several human resources information systems (e.g. Galaxy, e-) play a central role in supporting the human resources reform process and in providing mechanisms for recruitment, individual performance management and client service.

65. The Inspectors agree with the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the need to replace the present information systems with an enterprise resource planning system (ERP). This system will need to be customized to meet the requirements of the United Nations, but the use of a commercial platform will help integrate the information management systems within the Secretariat, as well as with the funds and programmes and with the United Nations system as a whole.[26] This is also in accordance with the recommendations contained in the JIU report "Common payroll system for the United Nations system". The Inspectors believe that the Secretariat should, as a matter of urgency, develop the "comprehensive information management" strategy and reconsider further developing any of the existing information management systems, taking into account the future fully integrated global system proposed.

66. They stress that a comprehensive information management system to support the RBM process should be able to cope with all planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting functions in an orderly and integrated manner. They therefore caution against any decision in the IT area which might precede the policy decisions on the entire RBM process. They wish to reiterate that any information management system should be designed only after having a clear vision of the entire set of organizational requirements, in particular those related to implementing RBM.

Recommendation 8

The Secretary-General should present to the General Assembly for consideration and approval a concrete proposal of a reliable management information system to support in an integrated manner the RBM process within the context of the comprehensive information management strategy to be drawn up. The system should be conceptually and technically able to cope with all planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting functions, including the human-resources-management and financial components. The project should be prepared in full consultation with all end users, including the field offices and designed in its final setting only after all other RBM components have been agreed upon.

Benchmark 7 **"Evaluation findings are used effectively"**

67. The evaluation findings and recommendations must be used effectively through timely reporting and feedback. They must serve as the main basis for the upcoming planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting cycle, as well as for policy development. In addition to these "ex-post" evaluations, "real-time" evaluations during an operation's process should also be enhanced to achieve specific expected results. For this purpose, it is essential to ensure that:

- self-evaluation is a main component of a clearly worked out evaluation system;
- resources are clearly allocated for evaluation purposes, in particular self-evaluation in each programme;
- appropriate central support and guidance for self-evaluation are provided;
- timely plans of self-evaluation are drawn up, as part of an overall evaluation plan for the Organization;
- the Organization's evaluation plan is aligned with the programming cycle to allow timely reporting and feedback to upcoming and future programme planning.

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[26] UNDP uses an ERP solution provided by PeopleSoft (ORACLE), while UNICEF uses one provided by SAP.

Equally, it is essential to establish and periodically assess the impact of the following:

- mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring and follow-up to the findings and recommendations of evaluations;
- "sharing mechanisms" for the findings and lessons learned from the various evaluations.

68. Self-evaluation is a managerial tool that allows managers to correct deviations during the implementation process; it helps them to achieve expected results through corrective action. While internal evaluation is done by an independent unit or person not directly related to implementation after the implementation phase, it serves to verify the reported achievements and, in a way, corroborates the accuracy of previous self-evaluation exercises. External evaluation serves to authenticate internal evaluation through external means.

69. The lack of a comprehensive evaluation culture is reconfirmed by the paucity of resources allocated to evaluation activities. "Less than half of the 30 offices and departments in the Secretariat have specific units or staff dedicated to programme evaluation."[27]

70. Regarding performance evaluation and reporting, the Secretary-General in his report "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" proposed that:

- United Nations activities in the areas of performance measurement should be given increased resources but also rationalized;
- monitoring and evaluation tools should be reformed and synchronized so that their results can be evaluated in the formation of the subsequent budget;
- budgeting and planning should be explicitly linked to the results of performance, work planning and the assessment of managerial performance so as to ensure the effective stewardship of resources provided by Member States along with other steps to consolidate and simplify financial reporting.

71. The Inspectors recognize that some steps have been taken to enhance evaluation, as indicated by the Secretariat in its comments on this report, such as:

- OIOS cooperation with OPPBA to ensure that Evaluation Plans were prepared for the 2006-2007 budget. Specific instructions and an evaluation plan template were included into the programme budget instructions;
- In terms of programme compliance with providing the Evaluation Plans, a total of 23 programmes provided evaluation plans for 2006-2007, with the programme managers planning for 239 discretionary self-evaluations and 13 discretionary external evaluations;
- OIOS has prepared an online manual, which presents guidance on the evaluation system and alignment among planning, programming, budgeting and feeding back into subsequent cycles.

72. ACABQ welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to increase attention to performance evaluation and reporting, as this area has been a weak link in the budgetary process. It looked forward to seeing a detailed implementation plan for this proposal. In addition, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a detailed proposal on strengthening the monitoring and evaluation tools in the Secretariat, taking into account recent experience in results-based budgeting".[28]

73. The Inspectors found the evaluation culture in the United Nations to be insufficiently developed. Evaluation is not regarded as being the logical culmination of the planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring, implementation and reporting cycle, or as a catalogue of lessons learned for the next cycle. Nor is it perceived as a measurement tool. Moreover, the resources earmarked for evaluation are scarce,

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[27] A/60/692.

[28] "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide", adopted by the General Assembly by its resolution 60/260 of 8 May 2006.

and the conceptualization and design of the evaluation activities lack coherence with the management process.

Recommendation 9

The Secretary-General should:

(a) Issue evaluation guidelines that define the different types, levels and timing of evaluations;

(b) Ensure that resources are clearly allocated for evaluation purposes;

(c) Align the Organization's evaluation plan with the planning, programming and budgeting cycle, ensuring that evaluation findings and lessons learned are fed back into subsequent cycles;

(d) Approve mid-term evaluation plans that combine self-evaluations with internal and external evaluations and report on their implementation.

Benchmark 8 **"RBM is effectively internalized throughout the Organization"**

74. Although the effective internalization of RBM is a key factor for its success, despite the efforts and the progress made, effective internalization of the results-approach within the Secretariat has not yet happened. To achieve this, all of the following should be carried out:

- Assign a clear institutional responsibility to a defined entity within the organization to assist and oversee the orderly and systematic introduction of RBM and ensure its coherent implementation;
- Develop a training strategy that would promote change management throughout the Organization and that would familiarise managers and staff at all levels with RBM concepts and requirements, as well as with its impact on their work;
- Verify systematically that training tools and kits are used and applied at all levels, and provide "on-the-job" training for this, as required;
- Review and adapt the regulations and rules governing the various work and management aspects in the Organization;
- Adopt human resources policies to foster a culture based on results;
- Verify systematically, including through surveys, the extent of understanding and application of RBM among staff and management at all levels.

75. Even though OPPBA has led the implementation of RBB, this is just one part of a comprehensive results-based approach. It has no responsibility over areas that are critical for implementing RBM (i.e. HRM and ICT). There is no entity in charge of promoting change management, in the RBM context, throughout the Organization. The Secretary-General has proposed the creation of a "change management" office, but it is not yet clear what possible role such an entity could play with regard to RBM.

76. Although RBB is included in the general training module in the United Nations, there is no training strategy for RBM to serve the purposes mentioned above. Moreover, the Secretariat lacks a culture based on results. And the extent to which staff and management understand and apply RBM is not verified at any level. On the positive side, however, the Inspectors note that regulations and rules governing some of the various work and management aspects of the Organization have been reviewed so as to adapt them to the requirements of a results-based approach.

Recommendation 10

To internalize the concept and practice of RBM within the Organization, the Secretary-General should (a) assign a clear institutional responsibility to a defined entity within the Organization to assist and oversee the orderly and systematic introduction of RBM and ensure its coherent implementation within the organization; and (b) develop a training strategy that would promote change management throughout the Organization and through which managers and staff at all levels would be familiarized with RBM concepts and requirements, and its impact on their own work.

Benchmark 9 **"A knowledge-management strategy is developed to support RBM"**

77. While no agreed definition of "knowledge management" yet exists, even among its proponents, JIU in its series of reports on managing for results has tentatively defined the term as "the systematic process of identifying, capturing, storing and sharing knowledge people can use to improve performance".[29] Knowledge management can be an important managerial tool to reinforce and complement RBM. A comprehensive and coherent knowledge-management strategy should take into consideration the cross-functional nature of the issue, involving different areas of the organization from human resources to information and communication technology services. No such strategy exists within the Secretariat in support of RBM. However, there are some initiatives aimed at the improvement of knowledge sharing, although mainly oriented to how technology is or can be used to facilitate knowledge sharing. But these initiatives are scattered and unrelated and do not form part of a common strategy. One of the least developed areas of knowledge management, given its cross-functional nature, is human resources management, where there are no provisions to encourage staff to report on innovations, best practices, lessons learnt, etc.

78. This is confirmed by an OIOS report, which states:

> "There is no common understanding of knowledge management or knowledge sharing in the Secretariat, and knowledge and information are often confused. 'Knowledge management' is typically associated with disseminating information, which is only part of knowledge sharing [...] In the Secretariat, the knowledge-sharing culture is not always open, senior leadership support is limited, incentives and rewards are lacking, few organizational knowledge management strategies exist and there are minimal if any dedicated knowledge-sharing resources."[30]

79. There has been some technological development within different areas of the Secretariat. However, the benefits of improvements at the technical level have to some extent been offset by the lack of an effective global information management strategy, which has meant that staff in disparate locations and departments have been unable to share their knowledge. "Neither the culture nor the technology encourage or enable knowledge sharing."[31]

Recommendation 11

The Secretary-General should develop a comprehensive strategy for knowledge management. It should be closely linked to the development of the comprehensive information management strategy and include related measures in the area of human resources management to promote the required culture change.

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[29] JIU/REP/2004/6, para. 83.
[30] "Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration", E/AC.51/2006/2, 24 March 2006.
[31] A/60/692, para. 49.

II. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

80. The primary objective of delegation of authority is to foster more efficient use of all the resources and facilitate the emergence of more agile, performing and responsive organizations. Delegation of authority is thus a prerequisite for successfully implementing results-based management. To be accountable for results, managers have to be duly empowered through clear delegation of authority in all areas, including, and in particular, human resources management[32].

81. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Framework highlights in a general way, as one of the principles underlying the kind of management style required for good governance, the need to empower staff to participate in decisions affecting the organization.[33] JIU has already proposed that the Secretary-General present to the General Assembly a comprehensive plan of action for delegation of authority based on a systematically developed concept rather than on an ad hoc approach, and provide concrete guidelines for its development. But despite having been approved by the General Assembly, such a plan of action has not been drawn up. The Secretary-General, in his report on the "Implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit"[34], points out that in paragraph 20 that "... much of the general findings and recommendations contained in the report were deemed to have been overtaken by events and a number of reform initiatives affecting the subject matter were overlooked in the report". The Inspectors are nonetheless of the opinion that those recommendations are still valid and should therefore be fully implemented.

82. Delegation of authority is often confused with decentralization of administrative activities. However, it is not about delivering services but about making decisions. Progress has been made in some areas (e.g. recruitment). However, management systems at all levels in the Secretariat, remain weak. The Secretary-General has pointed this out in several reform proposals, and in particular in his report "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692), where he stated that "The staff members of the Organization — its most valuable resource — are increasingly stretched. Our management systems simply do not do them justice". In the same report he also said that "We have too few skilled managers [...]" and has addressed this issue in some of his reform proposals: "I propose to strengthen leadership recruitment as well as training and development plans to build the cadre of senior and middle managers required for the modern complex global operations of the United Nations".

83. The issue is not a new one. The need to improve managerial capabilities was already identified in the 2002 report on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", where he proposed to improve managerial training across the Organization, making particular use of the Staff College (action 32 (c)). This is further confirmed by the new proposal (number 7) which expresses the need to prepare a major new leadership development plan to build middle and senior management capacity given that senior-level development is inadequate. And in another reference, which states that there are "many other levels of leadership in the United Nations that also need attention. A damaged culture, which is seen as limiting creativity, enterprise, innovation and indeed leadership itself, has meant that many managers have simply lost the capacity to manage."[35]

84. Managerial competencies will be dealt with later on in this review. However, in the context of delegation of authority, it must be understood that, for obvious reasons, good management systems as well as trained and capable managers, are a prerequisite for proceeding with further delegation of authority. The Secretariat needs to increase the level of authority delegated to management, in particular for managing human resources. But it should first address the issue of the lack of managerial skills.

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[32] This issue was already been discussed in detail in a JIU report on delegation of authority in human and financial resources in the United Nations, and the JIU recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly (JIU/REP/2000/6 (A/55/857); General Assembly decision 55/481 of 14 June 2001. A/55/49, vol. III, page 97).
[33] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 30*, A/55/30, annex II.
[34] A/59/349.
[35] A/60/692, para. 36.

Benchmark 1 **"The vertical chain of command is clear and unambiguous"**

85. The United Nations, being a heavily hierarchical structure, its vertical chain of command is clear and unambiguous. However, this in itself does not mean that the current chain of command is adequate to cope with the challenges faced by the Organization. The Secretary-General has stated that:

> "The present top management structure of the Secretariat is not well equipped to manage large and complex operations; and the Secretary-General, as Chief Administrative Officer, has too many people reporting to him directly."[36]

Benchmark 2 **"Delegation of authority is clearly determined"**

Benchmark 3 **"Delegation of authority is clearly defined in general administrative instruments and/or individual delegation orders, and is consistent"**

86. A comprehensive system of delegation of authority requires:

- specification of the authority delegated
- definition of the circumstances in which derogation of delegation of authority may apply
- systematic dissemination of all delegation instruments and their periodic review and updating for clarity and consistency.

In the United Nations, instruments for delegation of authority are mainly in place for financial management. Human resources management remains a less developed area, despite the increased authority delegated to managers through the new staff selection process; which, in turn, has not been matched by a corresponding system of accountability. This issue will be discussed further on in the present report under "recruitment".

87. Delegation of authority is intrinsically linked to accountability, another area of high concern. Human resources performance management is subject to further improvement in respect of delegation of authority. The General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to put forward proposals with a view to strengthening the authority of OHRM and the accountability of programme managers for issues related to human resources management.[37]

88. The Secretary-General has highlighted the need to increase delegation of authority to managers:

> "In order to continue efforts to improve management:
> (a) A thorough review will be conducted of delegated authority in order to increase the capacity and flexibility of managers to manage the resources allocated to them;
> (b) The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Management, along with those of the executive offices, will be redefined in order to support the increased delegation of authority"[38].

RBM requires increased delegation of authority, which means increased flexibility for managers, to be matched by increased accountability. Managerial accountability should be based on, inter alia, objective performance assessments supported by reliable performance measurement systems. This is another weak area, as indicated in different reports of the Secretary-General. "Not enough authority is delegated and — partly as a result — management performance is not adequately assessed."[39]

89. One important conclusion is that delegation of authority, accountability, performance management and management improvement are interdependent issues, and must therefore be dealt with in an integral manner and in the right order. The main concerns raised in respect of delegation of authority have been that in the absence of effective accountability mechanisms, further empowerment of managers could

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] A/57/387.
[39] A/60/692.

result in arbitrary decision-making and possibly even the misuse of power.[40] ACABQ stated that "delegation of authority is not synonymous with abdication of responsibility".[41] And the Secretary-General, for his part, has stressed that accountability for the use of resources is integral to an organizational culture of empowerment.[42]

90. The Inspectors support this perception by the Secretary-General and expect that it will become a reality through the pertinent administrative instruments and/or individual delegation orders.

Benchmark 4 **"Adequate management information systems support the delegation of authority"**

91. Timely development of reliable financial and human resources management components of the future integrated management information system is essential. Despite a number of improvements to the United Nations ICT infrastructure in recent years, the overall system remains fragmented and outdated compared with similar large and complex organizations. The Secretary-General stated:

> "The absence of an organized, top-down strategic approach to ICT has contributed to a proliferation of stand-alone systems that often support similar functions. ICT applications comprise one main administrative system, IMIS, for basic financial and human resources data and numerous ancillary systems for more specific purposes. These systems are not integrated with one another".[43]

92. Because they are not integrated, current management information systems do not support the authority delegated to management. The systems are old and at the time of their conceptualization and design this issue was not taken into consideration. IMIS can be quoted as an example of a system not matching the authority delegated to some of its users. It is currently used for processing staff travel requests, and financial regulations determine that some programme certifying officers have authority delegated to approve travel advances up to a maximum of $ 4,000. If the entitlements are above this sum, the travel advance must be approved by a finance officer. Nonetheless, IMIS currently does not prevent programme-certifying officers from certifying amounts higher than $ 4,000.

Benchmark 5 **"Managers are empowered through adequate access to information"**

Benchmark 6 **"Managers are empowered through adequate central support services and help-desks for human resources management"**

Benchmark 7 **"Managers demonstrate required competencies"**

Benchmark 8 **"Managers are empowered through adequate training"**

93. The need to improve management systems and managerial capabilities as a prerequisite to developing further delegation of authority, accountability and performance management has been referred to above. This is perhaps one of the most urgent issues to be solved. The Secretary-General has highlighted the need for such change:

> "A more rigorous selection process, increased training opportunities and sustained support for managers, combined with a clear statement of their responsibility and authority, will enable the United Nations of the future to enforce stricter but also fairer accountability rules for its managers."[44]

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[40] Judgement No. 914v of UNAT (Case 1022 GORDON/PELANNE) shows, for example, that the current accountability system does not ensure individual liability because it is discretionary (p.10, paras. IX and X).
[41] "First report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003", Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, A/56/7, para. VIII.27.
[42] "Human resources management reform", A/53/414, para. 6, 13 October 1998.
[43] A/60/692, para. 50.
[44] Ibid.

In the same report he also pointed out that "An internal staff survey in 2004 contained disturbing perceptions of management weaknesses".

94. He is trying to address this issue by introducing new procedures for improving the transparency and quality of selection for the heads of the United Nations funds and programmes. Interview boards have been created. Mandatory induction of new managers is being introduced. The Secretariat will also have a strong management advisory service to which managers can turn for help. The Management Performance Board, which the Secretary-General established recently, is designing clear criteria for assessing the performance of senior managers, who will be required to do likewise for the junior managers working under them.

95. The Secretary-General has indicated that "A major new leadership development plan is needed, covering recruitment, training and career development, to build middle and senior management capacity."[45] ACABQ believes that this proposal:

> "clearly falls within the purview of the Secretary-General in his role as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, unless there are additional financial implications associated with the building up of a cadre of senior and middle managers. In further developing the concept, a clear accountability framework should be drawn up for appropriate action in the case of underperformance or non-performance".[46]

96. It had already recommended in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 that "there should be a whole range of specific disincentives for failure to perform satisfactorily, up to and including dismissal, as well as incentives for excellent performance".[47] It is clear from the above that the Secretary-General does understand the urgent need for qualified managers. The Inspectors fully agree with his assessment and course of action, and support the ACABQ proposals.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY

Benchmark 1 **"A clear legal framework for the accountability system, including the system of administration of justice, is formulated in relation to the results-based management system adopted"**

Benchmark 2 **"Performance-oriented systems of accountability replace traditional, compliance-based systems"**

Benchmark 3 **"Accountability is applicable at all levels, from the top down. The executive heads and the heads of major organizational units are therefore the first to be held accountable for the results that they are expected to deliver"**

Benchmark 4 **"Unfaltering commitment of leadership"**

97. In an RBM approach, management requires a proportionate level of delegation of authority, flexibility and associated accountability to run in parallel. Traditionally, accountability in the United Nations system has been strongly associated with the use of financial resources. In an RBM approach, it is a cross-cutting element, which should be built within all areas and different levels of the Organization from programmes/projects to human resources management. The system of accountability should ensure commitment at all levels of the hierarchy, and in particular, at the top of the Organization. The executive heads and the heads of major organizational units are therefore the first to be held accountable for the

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[45] Ibid., proposal 7.
[46] "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide", Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, A/60/735, 24 March 2006, para. 14.
[47] "First report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007", Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, A/60/7, para. 57.

results that they are expected to deliver. Clear objectives and associated targets, at different organizational levels, are essential.

98. The Secretary-General, for his part, has stressed that accountability for the use of resources is integral to an organizational culture of empowerment. While there is, therefore, strong consensus on the need for a robust and reliable system of accountability, there is not necessarily a shared understanding of what such a system is or implies. In its Framework for Human Resources Management, ICSC defines accountability as follows:

> "Concept which implies taking ownership of all responsibilities and honouring commitments; delivering outputs for which the staff member has responsibility within prescribed time, cost and quality standards; operating in compliance with organizational regulations and rules; supporting subordinates, providing oversight and taking responsibility for delegated assignments; taking personal responsibility for personal shortcomings and, where applicable, those of the work unit."[48]

99. The Secretary-General has given the following definitions:

> "(a) *Institutional accountability*: the responsibility of the Secretary-General to explain and justify to the General Assembly and other relevant intergovernmental bodies, in a systematic framework and by an orderly process using transparent mechanisms, the performance of the Organization in using resources to achieve results mandated by the Member States in the Assembly and/or other intergovernmental bodies established under the Charter of the United Nations;
>
> (b) *Personal accountability*: the duty of an individual staff member to exercise defined responsibilities appropriately, with a clear understanding of the consequences, and to explain and justify to the official who conferred the authority the results achieved and the manner in which the authority has been exercised."[49]

100. Accountability in the RBM context could be defined, firstly, as liability for the use of resources (human, financial and material), but equally important as responsibility for programme performance and transparent reporting. Accountability is intrinsically linked to delegation of authority. One cannot be accountable for an expected result without having the related authority and resources and to achieve it. Moreover, accountability is only part of a comprehensive management system, supported by a strong internal control system and governed by a clear set of regulations and rules on financial, human resources and programme delivery from the planning to the reporting phase, which should constitute the legal framework for a system of rewards and sanctions.

101. The report of the Secretary-General "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide: detailed report. Addendum: Accountability"[50] (A/60/846/Add.6) gives some examples of "recent enhancements to the accountability system within the Secretariat":

> "the implementation of results-based management; the establishment of the Management Performance Board in 2005, the Ethics Office in 2006 and the Oversight Committee in 2005; enhancement of the Performance Appraisal System; protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct in 2006; the expanded and strengthened financial disclosure requirements in 2006; improved performance data; and expansion of training for all levels of staff. Beyond the Secretariat, the General Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 60/1, decided to establish the Independent Audit Advisory Committee to assist it in discharging its oversight responsibilities and, in its resolution 60/248, requested terms of reference and related resource requirements."[51]

102. The report concludes, nonetheless, that "Measures to determine the adequacy of results achieved, the soundness of management of results, financial and human resources, and procurement and

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[48] "Framework for human resources management", A/55/30, annex II, p. 43.
[49] "Investing in the United Nations for a stronger Organization worldwide: detailed report", A/60/846/Add.6, 19 June 2006.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., para 10.

subsequent action to hold staff accountable are probably insufficient".[52] These passages confirm the Inspectors' assumption on the United Nations transition from RBB to RBM. The Inspectors welcome the ideas contained in the same report, indicating that the full implementation of RBM should represent a significant step towards reaching the goal of accountability.

103. An Organizational Integrity Initiative (OII) was launched in 2003. The Initiative is a collaborative effort, spearheaded by OIOS with United Nations departments, funds and programmes. It is aimed at strengthening the understanding of managers and staff of their obligations and responsibilities with regard to integrity and professional ethics. As part of the Initiative, an Integrity Perception Survey was conducted by independent, external consultants to gauge the perceptions and attitudes of staff. And ethics training was provided to a number of senior managers. Despite these initiatives, accountability remains one of the weakest areas within the United Nations and perhaps, the fundamental failure of the current system. This assertion has been confirmed not only by the interviews held by the Inspectors, but also by the continuous references by ACABQ and the Secretary-General himself.

104. Accountability is the cornerstone of results-based management. It requires clear objectives and clear responsibilities defined at all levels, from the top and senior management down into individual staff work plans. The Secretary-General, himself, emphasizes the weakness of the accountability system and his failure to promote a new culture of performance, accountability and trust:

> "A key ingredient of any successful Organization is an ethical and accountable culture pervading its staff from top to bottom. For the United Nations, as an Organization founded on the high ideals of its Charter and seeking to set an example in the countries where it works around the world, this is doubly important. Unfortunately, in recent years it has become clear that we have too often fallen short of these high standards."[53] Further on in the same report he states: "Accountability is diffuse. The rules are complicated and incoherent and often lack transparency".

105. The Inspectors note that there is no single, coherent and commonly understood definition of accountability. The achievement of programme objectives has little consequences for resource allocation, work planning or assessments of managerial performance. The ACABQ, for its part, pointed out that a set of principles to ensure accountability is key to the successful management of any organization, and draws attention to the need to specifically define what is meant by accountability in the United Nations context and to set out the parameters of its application and the instruments for its vigorous enforcement. [54] The General Assembly subsequently endorsed this recommendation.[55]

106. The Inspectors are of the view that the Secretary-General possesses a clear perception about the role of accountability as the backbone of an efficient and robust management system. They nonetheless invite him to move forward from theory to concrete action to achieve his proclaimed accountability objectives.

Benchmark 5 **"Accountability for the use of human resources is based on the assessment not only of the degree of achievement of expected results, but also of the managerial competencies demonstrated in the achievement of these results, as measured for instance through a 360-degree feedback mechanism"**

Benchmark 6 **"Effective monitoring systems are in place for human resources management"**

Recommendation 12

The Secretary-General should draw up, for consideration and approval by the General Assembly, a system of delegation of authority and related accountability in line with the JIU benchmarking framework for RBM. A set of rules and regulations for planning, programming, budgeting,

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[52] Ibid., para. 38.
[53] A/60/692.
[54] A/60/735.
[55] General Assembly resolution 60/260.

monitoring and evaluation should be drawn up to institutionalize the system of delegation of authority and accountability as an integral part of RBM. The current financial and staff regulations and rules should be expanded to include additional provisions on delegation of authority, in particular in the area of programme performance. These new rules and regulations should become the legal backbone of the system and part of the internal control system required for implementing accountability.

107. There is considerable room for improvement here. Despite the launch of new systems and tools to help manage and monitor human resources (e.g. the e-PAS, which will be discussed later in this report under "performance management"), the Inspectors are of the view that there are no effective and comprehensive mechanisms to evaluate how human resources are managed. In the United Nations context, it should not be enough for managers to achieve their expected programmatic results, if the staff under their supervision are not managed according to well-established criteria and the United Nations basic principles (i.e. respect for diversity, gender balance, etc.). Managers should be held accountable for the use of all resources under their responsibility, including human resources.

108. The programme performance plan is the tool that the Secretariat uses to monitor and assess programmatic performance. It covers different elements related to the comprehensive management of the programme, including, inter-alia, human resources management. In the view of the Inspectors, it needs refining if it is to become a reliable mechanism to assess, for instance, how human resources are managed. Some of the indicators are meaningless. For example, in the area of human resources management, one of the items is "Staff Management relations & Staff welfare" where some quantitative indicators are used to measure progress. These include "Number of meetings with staff representatives per year" and "Number of Town-Hall meetings per year". Clearly, the number of meetings held does not help to determine the improvement in Staff-Management relations. Without an objective qualitative component, quantitative indicators give only a limited view of the item they are intended to measure. The Inspectors also believe that staff feedback regarding management should be taken into consideration. In this regard, the 360 degrees feedback schemes, for example, like the one in place in the United Nations Development Programme, should be used.

***Benchmark 7* "Strong oversight systems exist"**

109. A strong oversight system should:

- verify whether or not the existing oversight and control mechanisms are adequate in terms of independence, mandate, reporting, structure, staffing and professional strength to cope with the exigencies of results-based management;
- formulate, disseminate and enforce codes of conduct and ethical standards for all staff;
- provide accessible channels for staff for reporting instances of alleged fraud and other abuses, as well as effective protection for persons making such reports.

110. Recently JIU has prepared a report on oversight entitled "Oversight Lacunae in the United Nations system". [56]

111. The Secretary-General is of the view that OIOS itself:

> "has a complex set of responsibilities that is subject to potential conflicts of interest between its role in providing management advisory services to United Nations departments and its investigatory and audit functions. This latter role, in which the Office of Internal Oversight Services has traditionally provided internal audits for use by senior management, has also become blurred as a result of the General Assembly's recent decision to have the Office report directly to Member States as well as to the Secretary-General, and to allow Member States direct access to its reports."[57]

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[56] JIU/REP/2006/2.
[57] A/60/692.

The Inspectors concur with this view that this decision would need further reconsideration, as it breaks the barriers for good oversight practices and mechanisms. This is in accordance with the ideas expressed above and included in the JIU report.

112. The United Nations oversight community, in no few instances, consciously or unconsciously, interferes in the management processes. It does so either through micromanagement or through sometimes recommending contradictory courses of action. This distracts the managers from their main duty: managing for results. Despite the directives of the General Assembly asking the oversight bodies to coordinate their activities to avoid overlapping and duplication, the so-called "oversight indigestion" continues to be a serious impediment to improving management.

113. The General Assembly has emphasized the need for:

> "strengthening oversight in the Organization, and looks forward to considering and taking action on the report on strengthening of Office of Internal Oversight Sevices and the terms of reference requested in paragraph 4 of section XIII of its resolution 60/248 of 23 December 2005".[58]

As the JIU recommendations on oversight issues have been submitted through its report on Oversight Lacunae, and the Panel on Governance and Oversight is about to produce its report for consideration by the General Assembly, the Inspectors refrain from making concrete recommendations on this section.

Benchmark 8 **"A transparent, swift, independent and equitable system of administration of justice is in place"**

114. Recent reforms have already brought some improvements to the system of administration of justice. For example, the General Assembly decided, in resolution A/RES/57/307, that staff members may appoint external lawyers to assist them in litigation processes, thus bringing an additional measure of independence to the system, though possibly at the risk of increasing the number of cases and the costs. The report on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", issued in 2002, already highlighted the need to reform the internal system of justice, stating that:

> "[a] review of the current system of internal justice will be conducted to improve the efficiency of the system and to allow staff fair and due process."(action 34, included in the subject report A/57/387). The issue is reiterated in the latest reform proposal "The internal justice system is slow and cumbersome, and fails to strike the necessary balance between effective managerial control and staff members' right to due process."[59]

115. The Secretary-General refers to his latest reform proposals as:

> "[…] a chance to give Member States the tools they need to provide strategic direction and hold the Secretariat fully accountable for its performance […]. To achieve this goal, the United Nations Secretariat and Member States need to combine the current reviews of oversight systems and internal justice — both of which are essential to building a stronger, more dynamic and more transparent United Nations but are currently proceeding on separate tracks — with major reforms in six other broad areas, all closely interrelated."[60]

116. The Secretary-General also set up a Redesign Panel, which has been examining the reform of the internal justice system. The Panel has recently submitted its recommendations to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. The following is an excerpt from the summary of that report:

> "The Redesign Panel found that the United Nations internal justice system is outmoded, dysfunctional and ineffective and that it lacks independence. The financial, reputational and other costs to the Organization of

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[58] General Assembly resolution 60/260.
[59] A/60/692.
[60] Ibid.

the present system are enormous, and a new, redesigned system of internal justice will be far more effective than an attempt to improve the current system.

"Effective reform of the United Nations cannot happen without an efficient, independent and well-resourced internal justice system that will safeguard the rights of staff members and ensure the effective accountability of managers and staff members."[61]

The conclusions of the Panel coincide with the Inspectors' findings.

117. JIU itself has produced a number of reports on the administration of justice in the United Nations, the most recent being in 2000 and 2002.[62] These reports were discussed by the General Assembly, with some of the recommendations serving as a basis for Assembly decisions. The Secretary-General has also used them to take concrete action, for example, in establishing an Office of Ombudsman.

118. While commending the positive response of the Secretary-General, the Inspectors believe that more needs to be done to reach a fairer administration of justice that:

- provides legal protection to the staff and managers;
- makes managers and staff duly accountable for their behaviour in the observance of the United Nations core values and competencies and performance;
- makes the recourse to mediation a central piece of personnel administration during the pre-litigation phase as a way to tangibly reducing the number of cases of litigation.

The Inspectors have observed, for example, that in some instances the litigation processes have been prompted by inadequate handlings of cases during the pre-litigation phase.

119. The Inspectors have also observed that in designing a reliable administration of justice system, some points require particular attention:

- the ombudsperson should be chosen jointly by the administration and staff representatives;
- the current appeal mechanisms should be streamlined, by, for instance, offering a single channel for appeals related to staff performance, regardless of their nature (e.g. appraisal rebuttals, appeals against administrative decisions);
- the professionalism and independence of the members of appeal bodies must be guaranteed, with the option of including persons who are not staff members of the organization concerned;
- the entire appeal process should be duly documented and taken into consideration in the subsequent litigation process.

Recommendation 13

The General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to present to it, for consideration and approval, a transparent, swift, independent and equitable system of administration of justice in accordance with the guidelines contained in benchmark 8 of the benchmarking framework for the implementation of RBM approved by the Assembly through its resolution A/RES/60/257 and the comments made in paragraphs 115 to 117 of the current report.

Recommendation 14

The Secretary-General should review those staff administration rules which give rise to an inordinate number of appeals.

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[61] "Report of the Redesign Panel on the United Nations system of administration of justice", A/61/205, 28 July 2006.
[62] JIU/REP/2000/1 (A/55/57) and JIU/REP/2002/4 (A/57/441).

IV. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Benchmark 1 **"The main prerequisite for an effective performance management system is a change in the culture of the organizations concerned"**

120. Despite its efforts so far, the Secretariat has not yet internalized the results approach nor developed a "culture of performance". Several papers have pointed to the lack of a results-based culture. Without it, performance management systems cannot be effective. Whereas reasonable progress has been made in results-based budgeting, it has not run parallel in areas such as human resources management, where the performance management tool in place, the Performance Appraisal System (PAS), has poor credibility among staff, as an objective mechanism to manage staff performance. The Inspectors deliberately use the term "performance management". In doing so, they want to stress that, in accordance with the benchmarking framework for implementing RBM, any personal appraisal or evaluation system is meaningful only if used as a tool to measure and assess performance. In this respect, the Secretary-General may wish to consider replacing the term PAS by PMS.

121. A coherent and applied performance management (appraisal) system is fundamental for properly developing a results culture. It is a prerequisite for developing accountability. Without it, management becomes a subjective exercise, with rewards and sanctions being perceived as arbitrary or unfounded. Both managers and staff consider the PAS system to be subjective. Its application is not consistent across the Secretariat. Since it does not allow for fair comparison, it fails to encourage staff to improve performance. Although the Secretary-General claims that "up to and including those at the Assistant Secretary-General level, are covered by the performance appraisal system (PAS)", the Inspectors have ascertained during the preparation of other reports related to the implementation of the results approach within the Secretariat that some departments (e.g. the Department of Peacekeeping Operations) are not applying this principle, as D-1s and above are rarely assessed.

122. The implementation of the e-PAS is included as a key indicator in the annual programme management plan between the Secretary-General and the head of Department or office in order to emphasize the importance of senior management leadership in performance management[63]. OIOS has found that, as in many other organizations, staff members continue to focus on the ratings aspect of the e-PAS. The e-PAS may have become a useful planning tool but it is not an effective communications tool:

> "If, however, the main purpose of e-PAS is not only a tool to appraise performance, but a method to build a culture of communication, teamwork and coherent work-planning, either further communication efforts are needed to fully promote such an understanding throughout the Secretariat or the very existence of the rating mechanism needs to be re-examined since a disproportionate amount of attention is paid by both staff and management to the rating aspect of e-PAS.[64]

123. The United Nations Secretariat has indicated that it monitors rating distribution not to ensure conformity to a predetermined distribution curve, but rather to ascertain consistency of approach throughout the Secretariat. It has stressed that the widely held perception that the rating process was intended to impose a mandatory "bell curve" was not correct, when, as indicated in the guidelines for the PAS, there was no predetermined rating distribution. At the same time, it was observed that:

> "[…] experience with many similar systems indicates that when staff are honestly and appropriately appraised, the vast majority are found to have 'fully met expectations', while those who have consistently exceeded expectations or who have not adequately met expectations would naturally be small".[65]

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[63] "Qualitative and quantitative information on performance management in the common system", ICSC/57/R.2/Add.2.

[64] "Implementation of all provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/258 on human resources management", Note by the Secretary-General, A/57/726, para. 47.

[65] "Implementation of the Performance Appraisal System", A/C.5/51/55, para. 20.

124. In the view of OIOS, the application of the performance appraisal system still faces two major obstacles that require Organization-wide solutions:

- it is not always connected to how well a staff member contributes to the Organization;
- the connection between departmental and work unit goals and individual work plans is established idiosyncratically rather than being based on a systemic link to results-based management at the departmental level.

The Inspectors stress the following:

- stronger linkages need to be established between results-based management and individual accountability for achievements;
- performance results should but do not generate tangible consequences;
- the e-PAS itself should but does not enable immediate reward for good performance nor address poor performance;
- performance appraisal should but does not lead to promotion nor is it linked to salaries and benefits.

Strategic human resources that focus on changing the organizational culture need to link appraisal to specific tangible consequences and rewards. The Inspectors fully agree with the views expressed by OIOS.

125. A disproportionate amount of attention is currently being paid to the rating aspect of the e-PAS. If the main purpose of e-PAS is to serve not only as a tool to appraise performance but also as a method to build a culture of communication, teamwork and coherent work-planning, either further communication efforts are needed to fully promote such an understanding throughout the Secretariat or the very existence of the rating mechanism needs to be re-examined.

126. The e-PAS now includes both an evaluation of the goals accomplished and of the core values and relevant competencies identified for the cycle. Supervisors must rate their staff on each of the three core values, as well as the selected competencies. They must also indicate how the values and competencies were demonstrated during the period.

Benchmark 2 **"Performance management systems communicate and clarify organizational goals to staff and align individual performance expectations with organizational goals"**

127. The performance management system should represent the commitment and contribution, at the individual level, to achieving higher-level objectives (i.e. work unit, division, department, Organization). This requires clearly defining the cascade of objectives at each level, and putting in place a framework for work planning, programming and target-setting in which the links between departmental and work unit goals and individual work plans are systematically established and verified.

128. Currently, a discrepancy exists in the alignment of the performance appraisal cycle with the programme budget cycle within the Secretariat. The budget cycle covers a two-year period, whereas the PAS cycle is annual, going from 1 April to 31 March of the following year. This lack of coherence makes it difficult to evaluate and link individual performance and its contribution towards the achievement of higher-level results, which are assessed only on a biennial basis. The PAS cycle should be aligned with the annual programmatic work plans to ensure that individual work plans cascade from the objectives and goals of the departments and units, which would facilitate a shared understanding of the potential impact of an individual manager and staff member's performance on programme delivery during the evaluation period.

Benchmark 3 **"Performance management systems are seen as managerial tools that help the organizations run, direct and control their resources on a day-to-day basis"**

129. This is one of the weakest points of the current individual performance system. Staff do not believe that the PAS is a tool that helps them to improve performance, partly because it is not used consistently across the Secretariat and because it has a limited impact in their career development. Managers are sometimes afraid to use it as an effective managerial tool that could help them to detect and correct deviations against the expected performance. This is directly related to the shortfalls in management previously discussed in this paper. Currently, the PAS is regarded as an administrative process and not as a managerial tool.

Benchmark 4 **"Performance management systems are simple and easy to administer"**

130. The Inspectors consider the current e-PAS system to be a positive step forward, as it has facilitated performance evaluation within the Secretariat. It is easy to use, with the system clearly indicating the different phases of the process and the associated responsibility for each. It is a helpful tool for tracking the whole process and for determining whether or not deadlines are being respected. However, it does not form part of a wider and integrated human resources information management system, although it draws significantly from IMIS, the only system with centralized information on all Secretariat staff. The Inspectors see this as a weak point, since it should be part of a wider scope system (i.e. Galaxy, personal data contained in IMIS, etc.). The Secretary-General is aware of the lack of appropriate information management systems for the management of human resources "The information and communications (ICT) systems underpinning our management of human resources do not meet the stringent demands imposed by the global reach of today's United Nations".[66]

Benchmark 5 **"Performance management systems use appropriate and balanced measures for the achievement of goals"**

131. Performance management systems can be achieved through:

- comprehensive evaluation of individual performance to include both the achievement of results, the degree of satisfaction of "clients" and the demonstration of required values and competencies;
- identification and continuous use of both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

132. There is no homogeneity across the Secretariat and the use of client satisfaction surveys, as well as the appropriateness of the indicators chosen to measure performance, depends mainly on the quality of supervisors.

Benchmark 6 **"Performance management systems ensure consistency in assessment throughout a given organization"**

133. Consistency in assessment can be achieved by creating review panels/groups or similar mechanisms to review the quality, consistency and fairness of the performance appraisal reports of all staff and make recommendations to supervisors as appropriate. The lack of consistency in its application has a direct and considerable impact on how the PAS is perceived by the staff. At the present time, owing to the different interpretations and uses made of it by managers, it is not regarded as a fair tool for assessing performance. Moreover, no clear or common criteria exist for its application.

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[66] A/60/692, para. 25(k)

Benchmark 7 **"The results of performance appraisal are used as a basis for appropriate personnel actions, and in particular for career development"**

Benchmark 8 **"Performance management systems identify and address staff development needs. They also identify and address chronic underperformance"**

134. Given the problems highlighted above in the use and application of the PAS, it is not considered to be something that has any great impact on future career development and is thus a source of staff dissatisfaction. Additionally, the weakness in managerial systems, the widespread lack of managerial capabilities, the lack of transparency in promotions, etc. strengthen the perception of the PAS "just as an administrative process", whereas it should be perceived as a management tool.

135. The current PAS format is a reasonable tool to identify and address staff development needs and chronic underperformance. However, unskilled management cannot make appropriate use of it. And many managers are deterred by a stringent set of rules from facing the cumbersome procedures necessary to address chronic underperformance. This reconfirms the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his "Investing in the United Nations" report, and reflected in previous paragraphs of this review, concerning the lack of professional management. "There is currently limited understanding of the consequences of underperformance, poor performance, or non-performance. There are currently no sanctions for the non-achievement of expected results."[67]

136. In this respect, OHRM indicated in its comments on this report that "As agreed at SMCC-XXVII, performance management, including the possibility of a 360-degree feedback process will be reviewed by a joint staff/management working group. It is envisaged that the WG recommendations will be discussed at the next regular session of SMCC. Also, in his reform proposals the Secretary-General is linking performance to staff development and career advancement."

Recommendation 15

The Secretary-General should take action to improve the PAS for it to become an efficient management tool in line with RBM requirements. In particular, he should ensure that:

(a) All staff members and managers, including at the Director level, are evaluated and their overall performance rated, taking into account a 360 degree feedback process;

(b) The results of the PAS are at the basis of all personnel action and related reward incentives (promotions, step increases, recognitions, etc.) or sanctions;

(c) A review panel is established to ensure the quality, consistency and fairness of the appraisal reports across the Organization and to provide guidance to managers in harmonizing the use of ratings;

(d) The performance management system is aligned with the programmatic work plans.

Rewarding Performance

137. Strong and transparent performance management and accountability systems should be in place as a precondition for rewarding performance fairly and consistently. The Secretariat lacks both, and thus they should be reengineered before establishing and implementing a performance rewarding system, such as, for example, the ICSC-proposed "broad-banding" system. Step increases are commonly granted on a seniority basis every year without any or due consideration to staff performance, thus losing any positive motivational effect. The lack of uniform mechanisms and consistent criteria, compounded by a lack of consistency and transparency to assess performance across the Secretariat would make the implementation of PFP systems at this stage a risky exercise of subjective good will at best, which could lead to favouritism and arbitrary decisions, causing even more dissatisfaction and conflicts. This

[67] A/60/846/Add.6.

approach would not contribute towards the main purpose of a reward system, which must have a clear motivational impact.

138. JIU, in its overview of the series of reports on RBM, recommends the following possibilities, individually or combined with others, to address the required funding for the implementation of PFP systems:

(a) The legislative organs provide the resources necessary for the successful implementation of the approved programmes. Once the financial resources are approved, the executive heads are granted authority to use those resources in the way they deem fit, including for the PFP scheme in place, and are accountable to the legislative organs for their actions;
(b) A specified percentage of any savings accrued at the end of the financial period to be used by the organizations concerned as a source for financing remuneration increases linked to performance (change required in the relevant financial regulation);
(c) The earmarking of a specific percentage of the appropriation for staff costs to fund the scheme (change required in the relevant financial regulation);
(d) Freezing of within-grade salary level of low performers.

Recommendation 16

As a way to support the United Nations RBM approach, the Secretary-General should develop an incentive and pay-for-performance scheme for the consideration of the General Assembly. It should be based on the following premises:

(a) strong and reliable performance management and accountability systems have to be in place as prerequisites;
(b) the "rules of the game" regarding performance management and its consequences are made clear at the time of recruitment;
(c) objective criteria are set out to ensure consistency across an organization;
(d) an impartial panel is created to review the consistency and fairness of the distribution of awards;
(e) a staff survey is conducted to identify the key motivational factors underlying the staff performance;
(f) extensive consultations are held with all the interested parties.

V. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Benchmark 1 **"Human resources are aligned with the strategic objectives of the organization"**

139. Organizations can align their human resources with their strategic objectives by:

- Developing effective planning tools to define the human resources they need to fulfil their missions;
- Integrating human resources planning in the strategic and operational planning for the short, medium and long terms;
- Establishing an inventory of the main skills and attributes of the existing staff;
- Seeing that increased budgetary flexibility is granted to executive heads for the use of human resources by the governing bodies of United Nations organizations.

140. The answer to the current status of this benchmark is provided by the Secretary-General:

"Staff skills in the United Nations today are not aligned with current needs. We cannot always attract the best people and we lack the funds to help those we do recruit, particularly in the field, to develop their

careers. We have too few skilled managers and a system that does not integrate field-based staff even though it is their skills and experience that the United Nations increasingly needs."[68]

141. In his latest reform proposal, the Secretary-General gives his views on current human resources issues and suggests possible solutions as follows:

> "The need for a highly qualified, independent and international civil service is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. This is as important today as it was 60 years ago. The quality of our staff determines the success of the Organization, …I have introduced a number of initiatives to improve the way the Organization manages and develops its human resources, including the definition of organizational core values and competencies and their integration into all human resources systems — recruitment, development and performance appraisal; the introduction of a web-based recruitment system; empowerment of managers to select their own staff; policies to encourage staff mobility […] It needs to be able to recruit and retain leaders, managers and personnel capable of handling large, complex multidisciplinary operations with increasingly high budgets. Too many staff turn away from the United Nations, frustrated by the lack of a career path […]".

A survey published in 2005 revealed that two of the most de-motivating aspects of employment with the United Nations are the lack of career and promotions prospects and the frustrations caused by excessive bureaucracy.

142. Once again, the Inspectors subscribe to the Secretary-General's views on the need to align the HR with the organizational needs, which is one of the main RBM foundations. The challenge of the Secretary-General now is to put into action concrete measures to make them a reality.

***Benchmark 2* "The specific needs of international public organizations are recognized and a balance is achieved between time-limited and indefinite contracts, which is conducive to performance"**

143. In its overview of the series of reports on managing for results in the United Nations system, JIU states that:

> "Contractual arrangements are an essential element of an effective human resources strategy for empowerment and performance. They should be closely aligned with the type and duration of the function performed, easy to administer, fair and transparent. At the same time, recent experiments, as well as the jurisprudence of the United Nations Administrative Tribunals, have shown that in the absence of an effective performance management system and of adequately trained managers, the type of contracts granted makes little difference. The Inspectors have concluded, therefore, that while the issue of contractual arrangements has long been linked mostly to that of compensation and cost savings, it should now be seen as an integral element of the performance management system."[69]

144. The Secretary-General in his latest reform proposal points out:

> "The Organization uses a plethora of different types of contractual arrangements for hiring staff, which are cumbersome and difficult to administer and result in staff being treated unfairly. This creates divisions, breeds resentment, burdens administrators and hampers our ability to attract and retain the best people"[70].

He also addresses the issue of contractual arrangements (proposal 4), where he proposes

> "[…] to modify contractual arrangements and harmonize conditions of service to meet the needs of an increasingly field-based Organization, through:
>
> • Introduction of one United Nations Staff Contract under one set of Staff Rules. The conditions of service would mirror the current 100 series and would vary according to the length of continuous

[68] A/60/692.
[69] JIU/REP/2004/5, para. 57.
[70] A/60/692, para. 25(h).

service. Where mandates of particular projects or missions are clearly finite, appointments would still be limited in order to prevent undue expectations of long-term employment.

• Replacing permanent contracts with open-ended 'continuing appointments', as previously recommended to the General Assembly (see A/59/263/Add.1)."[71]

145. The Inspectors also believe that only two types of contracts should be used, indefinite contracts for the career staff performing core functions, and fixed-term contracts for the staff working in other functions (short-term assignments, projects, etc.). Contracts should be explicit regarding career and work expectations. Acquired rights of current staff should be respected, although these rights can never be used to justify underperformance. The Staff Regulations and Rules are clear in this respect and, therefore, demonstrated good performance is the only solid basis to preserve a contract.

Benchmark 3 **"Transparent, effective and fair recruitment/placement systems are in place to support results-oriented contractual policies"**

146. The new staff selection process launched within the Secretariat (ST/AI/2002/4) has given higher flexibility to managers to recruit staff; the staff selection process is supported by Galaxy, a management information system developed in-house, which has enabled the Organization to move from a paper-based to an electronic process; it is used to manage recruitment within the Secretariat. Galaxy is not used by the funds and programmes.

147. It is difficult to understand the rationale behind the increased delegated authority granted to managers in the current staff selection system given the serious managerial problems identified by the Secretary-General himself within the Secretariat and extensively discussed in this review. The recruitment of the right individuals is crucial for the Organization to fulfil its mandate; it is hard to understand why the fundamental issue of weak management has not been solved in a first instance and then enough authority delegated to improved management to recruit according to the Secretariat's needs. The consequences of this arrangement are difficult to determine at this stage.

148. The current staff selection system has been subject to consultations with staff. SMCC agreed, for instance " that management had consulted extensively with staff on all aspects of the new staff selection system and, in the process, took into account a significant number of staff concerns."[72]

149. Despite the consultations which have taken place, the current selection process has been criticized by staff during the interviews held with the Inspectors as, in their view, it is not based on consensus and adequate consultations with staff representatives. In the view of the Inspectors, the process is not clear enough as several of the clauses are subject to subjective interpretation; it imposes, in certain cases, less stringent requirements for appointment (and promotion) for external candidates than to staff members who have been in the organization for years. Furthermore, it is not linked to accountability measures.

150. The Secretary-General has also pointed out that recruitment "is simply too slow and reactive for the dynamic, frequently changing demands of a highly operational Organization. The processes are complex and administratively time-consuming. On average, it takes 174 days from the time a vacancy announcement is issued to the time a candidate is selected".[73] While recognizing that the e-staffing tool, Galaxy, has not solved all problems, it is significantly better than the prior paper-based system whereby recruitment took an average of 265 days. Most managers and staff interviewed by the Inspectors said that the Galaxy system had not helped much to improve recruitment. They consider it cumbersome to use and not very helpful for pre-screening suitable candidates for given positions. The Inspectors concur with this prevailing view.

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[71] Ibid.
[72] SMCC-XXVI (2002) report, para. 28.
[73] Ibid., para. 25(b).

151. In order to solve these issues the Secretary-General proposes "[…] to develop a more proactive, targeted and speedy recruitment system, through:

- More extensive outreach based on strategic workforce planning.
- Use of rosters of pre-screened candidates.
- Establishment of a dedicated recruitment service to support managers in their selection of staff.
- Reduction of the advertising time for vacancy announcements to 30 days.
- Expedited recruitment processes for surge needs.
- Expanded career opportunities for serving staff, and the creation of a broader pool of talent by eliminating eligibility restrictions based on contractual status, category, location or duration of service. This would include eliminating the existing restrictions for applicants to junior Professional posts that are not subject to the examination requirements.
- Revision of examinations and job profiles to match current needs.
- Strictly enforced compliance with gender and geography targets.
- Aiming to reduce average recruitment times by one half."[74]

152. The Inspectors support the efforts behind this set of proposals. However, they are of the opinion that the proposals do not address the main issue, namely: how to ensure the recruitment of the best-qualified candidates among all those meeting the minimum requirements for a given post, while adhering to the main human resources policies such as geographical distribution and gender balance.

153. The current recruitment and promotion process gives to managers latitude to choose among those candidates who meet "the minimum requirements". This approach is far from ideal and can easily lead to unfairness, favouritism and discrimination. It goes against the statements made by the Secretary-General in several papers indicating that the Organization should attract the best available candidates. Furthermore, it goes against regulations established by the General Assembly that stipulate that:

> "In the appointment of staff and the determination of the conditions of service, the paramount consideration is the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity […]".[75]

Thus, the correct approach should be to choose "the best candidate" among those who meet the minimum requirements. This could be done easily if quantifiable and/or verifiable criteria are pre-established, made known to the candidates and spelled out through a comparative evaluation, the results of which should be recorded for demonstrating the fairness and objectivity of the selection process in the event of cases of appeal.

154. In support of such a system of transparent recruitment, tools and mechanisms should be developed - for instance tests, competency-based interviews and "assessment centres" - to assist managers in discharging their responsibilities. Predefined, quantitative and qualitative, clear and verifiable criteria should be used in the selection of candidates, and the respective weights of these criteria should be clearly determined. The central bodies should provide assurance that these predefined evaluation criteria and the relevant procedures have been applied, and that the comparative evaluation has been duly recorded.

155. The Inspectors believe that the current system of deadlines introduced in Galaxy for the consideration of different types of candidates (i.e. 15 days, 30 days, 60 days) is an artificial barrier, which goes against the principles set out above. It does not help managers to select the best candidate; and through its application, other elements prevail over the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Moreover, it is unfair to the external candidates, who are unaware of its real possibilities when applying to a post.

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[74] Ibid.
[75] A/60/846/Add.6, para. 23.

156. Concerning the appointment of under-secretaries-general and assistant secretaries-general, which up to now and to a great extent, has been mostly political, the Secretary-General recently has taken some formal steps to make the process of selection of those officials more transparent and competitive. While the Inspectors commend these efforts, they believe that there is still much room for improvement, to ensure that the top managers possess the required competencies, values and professional skills for the posts concerned.

Recommendation 17

The Secretary-General should review the current recruitment, placement and promotion process, through an independent evaluation, to make it more objective, measurable and acceptable, and should ensure the following:

(a) Vacancy announcements should better reflect the expected competencies, core values and skills for each post and the related relative weight of each skill;

(b) Selection criteria should be based on the expected competencies, core values and skills;

(c) Selection criteria should be easily verifiable and/or quantifiable;

(d) Central review bodies should play a more active advisory role;

(e) Managers should be properly supported and advised by human resources services;

(f) The entire process should be fully transparent;

(g) The selection decision should be taken through a comparative evaluation that should be recorded and that should document which of the candidates is the best;

(h) Managers should be accountable for their decisions if, in case of appeals, the organs of administration of justice find wilful wrongdoing during the selection process;

(i) Selection procedures should be applied to all posts at all levels.

Benchmark 4 **"The focus of contractual reforms is shifted to performance"**

157. This issue has already been discussed above. Contracts should be explicit regarding the expected performance and the consequences of not meeting performance expectations.

▶ Recommendation 18

The Secretary-General should review the current contractual arrangements and submit concrete proposals for consideration and approval by the General Assembly taking into account the following guidelines:

(a) Contractual arrangements should be closely aligned with the type and duration of the function performed, easy to administer, fair and transparent;

(b) They should be not only linked to compensation and cost savings, but seen as an integral element of the performance management system;

(c) All contracts should be under a single series;

(d) There should be only two categories of contract:

- **indefinite contracts for career staff performing core functions**
- **fixed-term contracts for staff working in other functions (short-term assignments, projects, etc.);**

(e) The contracts should be explicit regarding career and work expectations;

(f) The need to honour the current status of staff holding permanent contracts should be recognized.

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Human resources management

Joint Inspection Unit

Staff mobility in the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Staff mobility in the United Nations" (JIU/REP/2006/7).

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STAFF MOBILITY IN THE UNITED NATIONS

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United Nations, Geneva, 2006

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination (now CEB)
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (formerly ACC)
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OPPBA	Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts
SMCC	Staff-Management Coordination Committee
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Staff mobility is a key element for the Secretariat to develop its activities properly and to adapt its wide range of programmes and activities to a constantly changing global environment. It is also a critical factor for staff, since it has a major influence on their professional and private lives. Mobility is a multidimensional issue; and any mobility policy, if it is to be viable, must take this fundamental principle into account by matching coherently the organizational requirements with those of the staff.

B. There is a consensus that for human resources management to be effective the mobility of staff needs to be ensured, both within the Secretariat, funds and programmes, and between organizations of the common system. Given the complexity of the issue from a system-wide perspective, and especially because of time constraints, this report deals only with the mobility policy within the Secretariat. There is also a consensus that mobility of staff is essential to creating a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service capable of fulfilling both the requirements of Headquarters programmes as well as the complex mandates of field activities, thus helping the Organization to increase its flexibility and responsiveness. The Inspectors who carried out the present review believe that there is a need to further develop staff mobility within the United Nations.

C. While recognizing that staff mobility is a crucial element in effective human resources management and that the Organization is evidently in need of an enhanced mobility system, the Inspectors firmly believe that other considerations should also be pondered, in particular, the need for specialized staff, the preservation of institutional memory, and the costs involved.

D. The majority of the staff members interviewed and surveyed are not fully convinced about the effectiveness of the current mobility policy: 40.9% of respondents to the survey indicated that they are "not very satisfied" with the current policy, while 31.7% are "very dissatisfied". Finally, only 12.8% find the policy "encouraging", whereas 32.9% find it "not encouraging at all". The Inspectors do not see this as an expression of opposition to the mobility policy per se, but rather as an expression of a general concern and uncertainty about the viability of the policy and its implementation. They believe that the current policy does not contain enough incentives for the staff to move and that more needs to be done to carry out the mandate of General Assembly resolution 55/258.

E. The Inspectors believe that if the Secretariat is to undertake effectively its work in a challenging and fast-changing environment, there will have to be increased movement of staff. They fully support the principles set out by the Secretary-General in his mobility policy. However, they believe that the current implementation of the policy needs to be further adjusted to fully comply with these principles and with mandates of the General Assembly. Based on the above, the Inspectors conclude that major challenges or obstacles for the further implementation of the mobility policy may be as many as the following:

- The current mobility policy does not fully address the General Assembly requests in many aspects (see paragraphs 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 26, 27, 37, 57, 58, 67, 69, 70 and 84);
- Despite the efforts made, there is an obvious lack of organization-wide culture of mobility, which is essential to the implementation of the mobility policy (see paragraphs 22 to 28);
- A comprehensive strategic mobility plan is not in place with quantified objectives that identify, inter-alia, the locations targeted, the type and volume of staff movement and associated indicators to measure progress in the implementation of mobility (see paragraphs 37 and 38);

- No forecast for the financial implications of the implementation of the mobility policy has been made (see paragraphs 70 to 75);
- Despite current and planned initiatives, there are no mechanisms in place for knowledge management and knowledge sharing to prevent the potential loss of institutional memory due to increased mobility (see paragraphs 67 to 69);
- Lack of a clear analysis of the Organization's needs regarding mobility to determine what type of skills, when and where they are required, coupled with a detailed inventory of current staff skills and competencies available by location (see paragraphs 37 and 38);
- There are no simple and coherent staff contractual arrangements in place for the implementation of the mobility policy, the proposed harmonization of contracts has not yet happened (see paragraphs 57 to 60);
- Possible legal implications regarding the further implementation of the mobility policy (see paragraphs 59 and 60);
- There are no specific mechanisms in place to cope with a potential increase of cases due to increased mobility that can provide an efficient administration of justice, ensuring a fair treatment of staff regarding the implementation of mobility (see paragraphs 59 and 84 to 86);
- Despite certain initiatives planned or being put in place, there are no enough incentive mechanisms to encourage staff to move (see paragraph 87);
- Regardless of some actions taken, no effective measures have been taken to improve work/life conditions in some of the duty stations, which are the major concern for the staff and for the Organization in respect of the implementation of the mobility policy (see paragraphs 88 to 90); and
- In spite of the consultations held, more consultations between management and staff are required (see paragraphs 22 to 28).

F. Since the Secretariat is currently undergoing a complex reform process — about which Member States have considerably diverging views — and taking into account the challenges and obstacles set out above, the Inspectors would like to caution against the possible risks of further implementing the mobility policy. Meanwhile, concrete measures should be taken for mapping out a comprehensive strategic plan for further implementing the mobility policy. In the meantime, efforts should be made to take concrete measures for mapping out a comprehensive strategic plan for further implementing the mobility policy by taking into account all the elements of the mobility policy so as to make the Organization better equipped for its further implementation. The Inspectors, therefore, would like to make the following recommendation, which they expect to ensure and enhance the effectiveness of the mobility policy.

Recommendation

The General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to resolve the challenges and obstacles identified in the present report (see paragraph E) before further implementing phase 4 of the mobility policy so as to better equip the Organization for the fuller implementation of mobility in the near future and to report to the General Assembly, at its sixty-second session, on the progress made in implementing the present recommendation.

Objective: To provide the General Assembly with an independent, external assessment of the viability, usefulness, cost-effectiveness and impact of the Organization's current mobility policy in the light of the principles and goals stated by the Secretary-General and the related policy directives issued by the General Assembly.

Introduction

1. Since the staff are generally regarded as the Organization's greatest asset, their mobility should be a shared concern of Member States, the Secretariat and the staff members themselves. Mobility is contemplated in the current set of Staff Regulations and Rules: for instance, in accordance with Regulation 1.2(c), staff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and to assignment by him or her to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations. However, for the greater part of the past 60 years of the Organization's existence, the urgency of having a mobile staff has never been so acutely felt as it is today.

2. In recent decades, the United Nations has witnessed profound changes, not only in the political area, but also in the economic and social fields, reflecting our rapidly changing world. The Organization also has changed from being only an international forum or a world body that mainly provides parliamentary, administrative and conference services at Headquarters or at a few main duty stations. It has expanded dramatically, with its mandate today embracing: (a) political activities such as peacekeeping, peace-building, post-conflict national rehabilitation, election-monitoring; (b) economic and technical cooperation; (c) support for human rights and humanitarian operations; (d) drug and crime control; and (e) a range of miscellaneous other activities that have a direct bearing on the lives and well-being of millions of people all over the world.

3. The Inspectors share the general view of the Secretariat that whereas the role and structure of the Organization may have managed to keep pace with these global political, economic and social developments, the management of human resources, and the profile and conditions of service of the staff, have not changed at the same pace. The Organization is increasingly called upon to deliver more field-oriented operational activities for humanitarian assistance, transitional security, post-conflict recovery, development support and monitor human rights. The scope and complexity of such activities require a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service, which implies, inter-alia, a more mobile staff.

4. The objective of this report is to provide the General Assembly with an independent, external assessment of the viability, usefulness, cost-effectiveness and impact of the current United Nations mobility policy in the light of the principles and goals stated by the Secretary-General and the related policy directives issued by the General Assembly.

5. Descriptions of the current policy have been drawn from Secretariat documents, notably the management position paper on mobility prepared for discussion at the 27th session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee (SMCC) entitled "Part III: Increasing Mobility".

6. The Inspectors would like to highlight the participation of staff in the web-based survey. The number of responses received was 1,290[1], which included a considerable amount of additional comments. The theoretical estimated response rate is 11%[2]. However, they believe that the real response rate could have been much higher, for the following reasons:

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[1] Only responses from staff under the 100 series have been considered.

[2] The calculation of the response rate is theoretical, given that the Secretariat could not provide figures of the total number of staff to whom the survey was actually broadcasted. The population used for analytical purposes includes all Secretariat personnel, irrespective of source of funding, holding an appointment of

- Owing to time constraints, the survey had been conducted during the first half of July, a period when a large number of staff are on annual leave;
- For technical reasons, the launch of the survey had been delayed in certain locations;
- The total population considered for the calculation of this estimate included the grades Under-Secretary General and Assistant Secretary-General, which were not part of the survey;
- The total population considered for the calculation of the response rates included Professional and General Service staff under the 100 series;
- If only Professional staff and their responses are considered, the theoretical response rate for this specific group is 17%.[7]

The Inspectors nonetheless consider that the number of responses and comments received constitutes a significant sample from which conclusions can be drawn.

7. The Inspectors wish to express their sincere appreciation to the many people who responded readily to requests for assistance, and particularly to those who so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise through their participation in interviews and in the staff survey. Their views have been very valuable for the preparation of this report.

Methodology

8. The Inspectors reviewed documents and held interviews with heads of department, executive officers, managers and staff at headquarters duty stations (New York, Geneva and Nairobi) and two regional commissions (Economic Commission for Africa and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). The Joint Inspection Unit also conducted a web-based staff survey throughout the Secretariat to gather staff views and perceptions.

9. In an effort to prepare the current review in full cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat, in March 2006 one of the co-authors travelled to Headquarters, New York, to explain to senior officials the rationale and timeliness of the review and seek their preliminary responses, input and active cooperation. Interviews took place and requests for input from the Secretariat were made but regrettably these were not received. In April 2006, the Inspectors shared with several officials the terms of reference of the review and sought their comments. Again, no comments were received. In June 2006, the Inspectors went on official mission to Headquarters to interview, among others, those high-level officials who were dealing closely with staff mobility. They managed to meet many concerned staff. Unfortunately they were not able to meet two crucial high officials, who had declined to see them for reasons not disclosed.

10. On 4 August 2006, the Joint Inspection Unit sent the draft report to the Secretariat for factual corrections and official comments. The comments received have been reflected, as appropriate, in the current report. In view of the nature of the comments, the Inspectors planned another mission to New York, hoping to further discuss them with the relevant Secretariat officials. Regrettably, that mission had to be cancelled as one Inspector did not receive his entry visa on time (it had been requested in July 2006). The Inspectors wish to recall the Secretary-General's attention to

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one year or more under the 100 series of the Staff Rules. Not included were mission appointees, Field Service staff and language teachers, national officers and public information assistants. As at 30 June 2005, the size of this population was 11,746, which includes the following categories: USG and ASG, Directors (D-2 and D-1), Professional staff (P-5 to P-1), and General Service (G-7 to G-1) and related categories (Security Service and Trades and Crafts). These data have been taken from the report of the Secretary-General, "Composition of the Secretariat", A/60/310.

[7] The population taken into consideration for this calculation is all Secretariat staff, irrespective of source of funding, in the Professional category and under the 100 series (4,124) as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, "Composition of the Secretariat" (A/60/310). The total number of responses received from Professional staff, under the 100 series, is 694.

the need for United Nations officials to observe the provision of the JIU Statute, notably, Article 6(2), which states that "The Inspectors shall be accorded full cooperation by the organizations at all levels, including access to any particular information or document relevant to their work"

11. In its comments to this report, the Secretariat indicated that: "many of the observations and findings contained in the draft report are premature and are likely to be outdated or incorrect by the time the report is issued" and suggested that since it was preparing new documents for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, some of the conclusions of the report might be overtaken by events by the time of its discussion by the Assembly. The Inspectors would like to point out, however, that during their interviews in June 2006 with the officials at Headquarters, they had not been informed of any such developments. Furthermore, such documents were still not available when they were finalizing the report. The Inspectors are convinced that many of the findings and conclusions of their report could be used to help guide the further implementation of the current mobility policy. They would also be pleased if the findings and conclusions, already shared with the United Nations Secretariat in the draft report, could be proved to have been overtaken by events and reflected in the promised documents referred to above.

I. LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

12.The General Assembly in its resolution 51/226 requested the Secretary-General to encourage mobility and pursue the implementation of managed reassignment programmes. Subsequently, in its resolution 53/221, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish mechanisms towards, and to implement a policy of, enhanced mobility across functions, departments and duty stations. It encouraged him to explore, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the possibility of enhancing mobility among organizations of the United Nations system.

13.In subsequent resolutions (55/258, 57/305 and 59/266) it requested the Secretary-General to develop further criteria for mobility to maximize its benefits for the Organization and ensure fair and equitable treatment of all staff, stating the principles on which mobility should be based, as follows:

(a) Mobility does not negatively affect the continuity and the quality of services and the institutional memory and capacity of the Organization;

(b) Mobility does not lead to the transfer or abolition of posts as a result of vacancies;

(c) Mobility has a positive impact in filling existing high vacancy rates at some United Nations duty stations and regional commissions;

(d) There is a clear differentiation between mobility within duty stations and mobility across duty stations and that the latter is a more important factor in career development;

(e) Mobility is encouraged for all posts in the Professional and higher categories.

14. In addition, resolution 59/266 further develops the above principles along the following lines:

- "Stresses the need to ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accountability of programme managers for the implementation of human resources policies;
- "Requests the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to ensure that mobility is not used as an instrument of coercion against staff and to ensure that appropriate monitoring and accountability measures are in place;
- "Requests the Secretary-General to develop a strategic plan with indicators, benchmarks, time lines and clear criteria for the implementation of mobility policies and to report thereon, including with information on the financial implications, to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session;

- "Requests the Secretary-General to consider the use of incentives with a view to encouraging staff to move to duty stations with chronically high vacancy rates;
- "Invites host countries, as appropriate, to review their policies for granting work permits to spouses of United Nations staff;
- "Invites the Secretary-General to continue to explore ways of assisting spouses to find employment opportunities;
- "Acknowledges that mobility needs to be supported through greater efforts to improve conditions of life and work at the various duty stations."

II. GENERAL CONCERNS

15. The General Assembly, through several resolutions, has requested the Secretary-General to give full consideration to the need for greater mobility in the context of human resources planning, and to establish mechanisms towards, and to implement a policy of, enhanced mobility across functions, departments and duty stations.

16. Pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General in his report "Human Resources management reform"(A/55/253) put forward a proposal on a new mobility policy. It included a set of mechanisms to ensure that the Organization could move people between functions, departments, occupational groups and duty stations:

- To meet its operational requirements;
- To prepare staff to operate in a multidisciplinary environment;
- To develop a more integrated approach to the many facets of the Organization's work;
- To promote greater integration between field and headquarters-based staff;
- To provide staff with varied career opportunities.

17. Through the interviews they conducted and the web-based survey, the Inspectors could perceive that a large number of managers and staff members were sceptical about the current mobility policy. But the Inspectors believe that this does not necessarily mean that they are against the policy as such but rather expresses their general concern and uncertainty about its viability and implementation.

18. In addition to the common concern and uncertainty mentioned above, it is also interesting, indeed, thought-provoking, to note that staff members serving at some headquarters duty stations (New York, Geneva and Vienna) are on the whole more negative towards or less supportive of the mandatory nature of the policy. While on the other hand, their counterparts in Nairobi and most of the regional commissions and field duty stations such as Addis Ababa, appear to be more positive towards the mobility policy.

19. During the interviews, the Inspectors noted that many managers and staff members in the "headquarters" group query the rationale for a "mandatory" mobility policy, and express higher concerns about issues related to the feasibility of mobility, in particular, of staff members engaged in specialized professions, and about the need to maintain institutional memory. Most of the staff are specifically concerned about some of the obviously difficult issues related to mobility, such as appropriate training, spouse employment, education of children and other work/life conditions in some duty stations. And those staff members who are willing to move tend to fear "getting stuck" in the field. The Inspectors believe that this matter could be addressed through well-planned rotational schemes assuring such staff members an onward assignment after serving in the field. Staff members also expressed concern about the potential problems of residency status of their spouses and children remaining in the host countries of their current duty stations.

20. The Inspectors noted that staff members in Nairobi and in the regional commissions, while expressing strong support for the enhanced mobility policy proposed by the Secretary-General, stress that it is imperative to make the policy viable and effective by ensuring equal opportunities for staff throughout the Organization. Staff representatives in one of these duty stations stressed specifically that staff should not be obliged to remain too long at hardship stations but should be given the opportunity to work at "headquarters" duty stations. They hoped that the new mobility policy would seriously address the issue, ensuring mobility not just "across the corridor" but also between duty stations, especially between Headquarters and field duty stations.

21. The Inspectors fully agree with the Secretary-General that because of the scope and complexity of its activities, the Organization needs an effective mobility policy that would create a more versatile multi-skilled and experienced international civil service and prepare its staff for working in a multi-disciplinary world environment. However, before a viable and effective mobility policy is introduced, the Inspectors insist on the need for having a clear understanding, and a balanced estimation, of both the positive and negative aspects of the policy. Ways and means also need to be found to overcome the various challenges and obstacles referred to above. Efforts should therefore be made, first and foremost, to develop a "culture of mobility" within the Organization and to draw up a comprehensive strategic plan for implementing the mobility policy.

III. MAIN FINDINGS

A. Lack of an organizational mobility culture and adequate consultation between management and staff

22. The General Assembly, in its resolutions, nas repeatedly stressed the importance of staff-management consultations. Effective implementation of staff mobility requires, first and foremost, a mobility culture within the Organization, without which, there will not be support from the staff at large. The development of such a culture, in turn, requires open and adequate consultations and engagement with staff and managers about the value and individual challenges of mobility. Only then can the management policy decision be turned into a common and conscientious effort.

23. The Secretariat, in its comments on the draft report, informed the Inspectors about the consultations held between management and staff:

> "Mobility was identified as an element of the strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization introduced by the Secretary-General in 1994 (A/C.5/49/5). The Secretary-General highlighted the need to take concrete steps in promoting career developing and mobility in his 1997 Report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (A/51/950). The issue of mobility was discussed in SMCC-XXIII (1999) where it was agreed that mobility was an important and complex issue requiring further consideration and a full discussion at a subsequent meeting. The report of SMCC-XXIV (2000) reflects extensive discussions of mobility, during which consideration was given to proposals submitted by management, the Geneva Staff Coordinating Council, the ESCWA Staff Council, the ECA Staff Union Committee and the staff representatives attending SMCC-XXIV. The discussions resulted in 16 points of convergence (to which the New York Staff Union had reservations), most of which are reflected in the current mobility policy and its implementation plan. Notably, SMCC-XXIV agreed that 'mobility should be viewed in its broadest sense, with mobility requirements being fulfilled by movement among functions, departments, occupations, duty stations and organizations beyond the Secretariat'. This statement has become the basis for the definition of mobility used by the Organization in its current policy."

24. Before introducing the mobility policy, the Secretariat said that it had received comments on the administrative issuances establishing the new staff selection system from staff representatives from seven duty stations and heads and chiefs of administration/ personnel from 23 offices and

departments. It had reviewed these comments and addressed them in the redrafting of the administrative issuances of April 2002, ST/SGB/2002/5 and ST/SGB/2002/6, as well as ST/AI/2002/4. Subsequently, SMCC at its meeting in 2002 agreed that "management had consulted extensively with staff on all aspects of the new staff selection system and, in the process, took into account a significant number of staff concerns".

25. The Secretariat went on to explain to the Inspectors that, in 2005, OHRM had launched a global information campaign for the entire staff to continue to build awareness of the mobility policy and inform them of the support available to help them prepare for mobility. The campaign included a letter from the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management to all staff, followed by briefings with senior managers, executive officers at Headquarters and human resources chiefs at offices away from Headquarters.[4]

26. In this connection, the Inspectors wish to point out that despite all the consultations referred to above, many of the managers and staff members whom they interviewed have expressed their regret that there had not been enough prior consultation between Headquarters and the regional commissions, nor between management and the staff and their representatives before the Secretary-General launched the new mobility policy. Representatives of some departments at Headquarters also complained that little prior consultation had taken place. The Inspectors firmly believe that if there had been sufficient and adequate prior consultation, there would now be fewer misgivings about the new policy and a comprehensive strategic plan for its implementation might have been worked out. They are therefore led to conclude that (a) the consultations held do not properly reflect staff concerns, or (b) the managers and staff members have not been kept properly informed of the development of the consultations.

27. The results of the staff survey further confirm the inadequacy of the consultations. Around 86% of the respondents stated that they had not been consulted in the development of the current mobility policy and over 67% of respondents did not know whether their staff representatives had been consulted. The Inspectors would therefore also like to draw this point to the attention of staff representatives, as it shows that in spite of the consultations that have taken place, staff still feel that they have not been properly informed. They conclude that there is a serious lack of common understanding and awareness of the value and necessity of an enhanced mobility policy among the staff at large. This absence of a mobility culture in the Organization, in the opinion of the Inspectors, constitutes a major challenge for the implementation of the current mobility policy.

28. The Inspectors noted that some progress had been made in establishing the mobility policy and initiating a change in the organizational culture, with the concept of mobility now being accepted as an essential element of the international civil service. Nonetheless, significant challenges still confront its full and effective implementation. The sheer numbers of staff, their different skills and the diverse functions they perform, the dispersion and the differing sizes of the locations where they serve, make the administration of mobility complex and substantially different from the situation prevailing in the United Nations Funds and Programmes. And there are at least 23 occupational groups, not all of which are replicated in all duty stations.

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[4] The Secretariat informed the Inspectors that OHRM had organized townhall meetings and information sessions for 10 departments and offices at New York Headquarters. Human Resources chiefs gave briefings at UNOG, UNOV/UNODC, UNON/UNEP/UNHABITAT, ECLAC, ECA, ESCAP, ESCWA, ECE and UNCTAD. Printed and electronic materials containing answers to frequently asked questions, as well as suggestions on preparing for mobility, were made available on i-Seek, the United Nations Intranet.

B. Lack of a strategic plan for mobility

29. In any organization, the implementation of a mobility scheme is a major undertaking that requires careful planning and that should not disrupt the course of normal operations. The United Nations is no exception in this respect. Given the complexity of the Secretariat, a comprehensive strategic plan is vital. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has already identified the need for such a plan. The plan should include quantifiable objectives that identify the type and volume of staff movement consistent with the new policy, action plans with timelines and benchmarks to facilitate desired mobility patterns, and metrics that continuously measure changes in the mobility patterns and organizational outcomes.[5] Subsequently, the General Assembly in resolution 59/266 requested the Secretary-General to develop a strategic plan with indicators, benchmarks, timelines and clear criteria for the implementation of mobility policies.

30. Noting the consultations conducted at SMCC-XXIV, the Secretary-General in his report on human resources management reform (A/55/253, paragraphs 38 – 44 and annex IV) presented mobility as one of the building blocks of a comprehensive human resources management implementation programme. Annex IX of the same report stated that a worldwide survey of work/life issues that influence staff members' work and decisions about mobility was being undertaken to ascertain the issues of major concern to staff. In annex III, the Secretary-General stressed the need for the Organization to move from a voluntary to a managed approach to mobility, based on the following principles:

> "(a) Mobility is not an end in itself, but a tool to enable the United Nations to fulfil its operational requirements more effectively;
>
> (b) Mobility patterns will vary depending on the requirements of the job and the location;
>
> (c) Mobility is a shared responsibility between the Organization, managers and staff, in which all must play an active role;
>
> (d) Mobility will be integral to career patterns; career progression will depend, in part, on evidence of mobility."

31. The descriptive information in the following paragraphs has been taken from Secretariat texts on mobility; in particular, the management position paper on mobility prepared for discussion at the 27th session of SMCC entitled "Part III: Increasing Mobility", which was made available on i-Seek. "The mobility policy, introduced in 2002 was established as an integral part of the staff selection system..."[6] (ST/SGB/2002/5 and ST/AI/2002/4). "It was designed to stimulate the mobility of 100 series staff, as an essential element of career development ... Under this policy, mobility was defined broadly to include movement across functions, occupational groups, departments, duty stations and agencies of the United Nations system"[7]; the movement of staff within the same occupational group, department or office and/or duty station is also contemplated as mobility if it involves a change of supervisor, or if the responsibilities assumed are substantially different. Since its introduction the following procedures and mechanisms have been put in place:

(a) Maximum post occupancy: five years for all 100 series staff from G-5 to P-5 and six years for those above P-5;

(b) Minimum post occupancy two years or only one year if it is the second lateral move[8];

(c) All job opportunities are available first for lateral moves of serving staff;

(d) Promotion is linked to mobility: two lateral moves are required before promotion to P-5;

(e) Time-in-grade eligibility requirements have been abolished;

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[5] "Impact of the human resources management reform", A/59/253, 24 September 2004.

[6] iSeek, United Nations intranet.

[7] Ibid.

[8] A lateral move is a movement of a staff member which does not imply a change in his/her current grade.

(f) Departmental occupational networks are being established to promote mobility, staff development, networking and multidisciplinary approaches.

32. The strategy for implementing mobility has four phases:

(a) *"Phase 1: 2002-2004 (completed):* introducing the concept of mobility, on the basis of staff-management consultations and intergovernmental review; promoting culture change; putting in place programmes and mechanisms to prepare and support staff;

(b) *Phase 2: 2004-2005 (completed):* refining the strategic plan for the implementation of managed mobility; developing the necessary policy and IT infrastructure; increasing awareness and understanding and developing networks to support mobility;

(c) *Phase 3: 2005-2006 (ongoing):* refining the necessary policy and IT infrastructure; ongoing communications and awareness building; and

(d) *Phase 4: 2007- 2009:* implementing managed mobility."[9]

33. When staff members reach their post-occupancy limit, their current posts will be included in a mobility compendium and they themselves must initiate the arrangements to move to another function, occupational group or department, the mobility requirement can also be fulfilled by movement to another agency within the United Nations system. Starting May 2007, "managed mobility" is to be introduced, level-by-level in a gradual, phased manner, and spread over time as follows:

Grades	Period
P-3 and G-7	May 2007 - October 2007
P-4 and G-6	November 2007 - April 2008
P-5 and G-5	May 2008 - October 2008
D-1 and D-2	November 2008 - April 2009

Each of these exercises will have three main phases:

(a) *"Compendium.* OHRM will issue a compendium of the posts encumbered by participating staff members who have reached their post occupancy limit… Access to the compendium will become available to a participating staff member through 'My Mobility' module of the Galaxy eStaffing system.

(b) *Expressions of preferences.* Only staff whose posts are in the compendium may indicate their interest for other posts at their personal level in the compendium… When applying to the mobility compendium, staff will be encouraged to apply to at least five posts and will be given an opportunity to express their preferences for posts or locations. While these preferences will not be binding, they will be taken into consideration to the greatest extent possible… Staff members who do not express a preference for any assignment will be automatically reviewed against functions commensurate with their competencies, qualifications, skills and experience.

(c) *Selection Process.* OHRM … will submit to programme managers, for review and evaluation, all expressions of preferences received for posts in their respective department or office as well as the names of staff member who did not apply but meet the competencies, qualifications, skills and experience of the posts. The evaluation process is expected to include an interview – either in person, via video-teleconference or by telephone."[10]

34. OHRM will conduct a matching exercise of all participants for all posts based on the evaluation of the programme managers. A similar exercise will also be conducted by the local human resources office at each duty station for locally recruited GS staff. The Assistant

[9] iSeek, United Nations intranet.
[10] Ibid.

Secretary-General for Human Resources Management will review and approve the proposed reassignments for all Professional staff, and for General Service staff at Headquarters. Proposed reassignments of General Service staff at offices away from Headquarters will be approved by the respective heads of office.

Pilot projects with P-2 staff

35. OHRM in its comments on this report informed the Inspectors that pilot projects had been conducted in which all P-2 staff members who joined the Organization after 1 January 2000 were subject to managed reassignment programmes during their first five years of service, as part of their contractual obligations. The five voluntary reassignment programmes and three managed reassignment programmes for P-2 staff had yielded valuable lessons learned and best practices that in the view of OHRM could be applied to staff at all levels and in different categories. The most critical lesson, according to OHRM, is the fundamental recognition by both individual staff members and programme managers of their statutory obligation to comply with the requirements of the programme.

36. However, the Inspectors believe that some of the lessons learned from this P-2 programme cannot be directly extrapolated to other levels and/or categories of staff, given that mobility, while implied in Staff Regulation 1.2 (c), is not an explicit contractual requirement for other types of staff. Furthermore, most people joining the Organization at the P-2 level are young professionals in the first years of their careers, a time when they are more likely to be eager to learn and ready to take on challenges. They would also at this stage be likely to have fewer family responsibilities that more senior staff.

37. The General Assembly has repeatedly requested the Secretary-General to ensure proper mobility of staff between all the regional commissions and duty stations to overcome the high vacancy rate in certain locations. But the current mobility policy does not include geographical targets, which are essential for tracking progress in reducing the high vacancy rates. The Inspectors, therefore, consider the current mobility plan to be neither comprehensive nor strategic. It lacks quantifiable objectives that identify the locations targeted, the type and volume of staff movement and has no associated indicators to measure progress in implementation. The Inspectors believe that in developing a strategic mobility plan the starting point should be the analysis of the Organization's needs so as to determine what type of skills are required and where. A detailed inventory, by location, should be drawn up of staff skills and competencies. The comparison of the organizational needs, including when and where these needs arise, with what is already available in-house should form the basis for this strategic planning.

38. Effective human resources planning would ensure that the appropriate staff are in place to accomplish the Organization's goals. It entails assessing the current skills and future needs, as well as making projections of age and geographic targets. This should form the basis for staffing and recruitment plans and for determining if future organizational needs will be met by recruiting, training and/or rotating staff. The need for such a gap analysis was addressed by OIOS in one of its recommendations in "Impact of the human resources management reform" (A/59/253). The Inspectors believe that, without a gap analysis, it is hard to define and justify how the current mobility policy might meet the Organization's needs. They could find no evidence that the necessary gap analysis had been undertaken or that the current mobility programme forms an integral part of human resources planning.

C. Mandatory versus voluntary mobility: examples of different approaches

39. Technically, mobility can be voluntary, managed or mandatory. The current policy promotes "voluntary" mobility through different mechanisms during the fixed post-occupancy period. However, and despite the efforts to promote this kind of mobility, the approach is essentially a

mandatory one, as it dictates strict enforcement of current post-occupancy limits (five years for posts from G-5 to P-5, except for P-2 posts; and six years for D-1/2 posts). In its comments on the draft report, OHRM stated that "After 2002, the Organization has facilitated and encouraged the voluntary reassignment of staff members but this does not mean that the mobility policy was intended to be voluntary at any stage."

40. Other organizations, including the European Commission, have opted for a voluntary approach for all their staff, excluding officials in top management posts (grades A-1 and A-2), who should rotate every five to seven years[11]. As the Secretariat has pointed out, policies for mandatory mobility are already in place for a number of United Nations Funds and Programmes (UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR). The recent inter-agency mobility accord, which regulates the movement of staff among the different agencies in the United Nations system, requires the agreement of the staff member (Article I, paragraph 1.5). Thus this approach can also be considered to be voluntary.

41. The Inspectors wish to point out some differences, for example, between the European Commission's mobility policy and that of the United Nations. The Commission has a mandatory mobility scheme for senior managers only; with mobility for lower levels being voluntary. The United Nations, on the contrary, has put in place a mobility scheme that is mandatory for all levels, but that has less stringent requirements for senior management. All the staff in grades G-5 to P-5 levels have to move every five years; whereas the post occupancy limit for the D-1/2 level is six. Furthermore, senior management will be the last to move according to "phase 4" of the current mobility policy (see above paragraphs 32 and 33). The Inspectors fail to understand the rationale behind this preferential treatment for senior managers. In their view, staff at this level should be exemplary by leading the way in implementing the mobility policy.

42. The authority for the Secretary-General to move staff members wherever they are needed is another element of a mandatory mobility scheme. This authority is defined under Staff Regulation 1.2(c) "... staff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and to assignment by him or her to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations." The General Assembly in its resolution 51/226 limited the Secretary-General's discretionary power of appointment and promotion, outside the established procedures, to his Executive Office and the under-secretary-general and assistant secretary-general levels, as well as special envoys at all levels, while General Assembly resolution 59/266 recognized his authority to assign and deploy staff according to the operational needs of the Organization. The Inspectors believe that the Secretary-General's authority to move staff members wherever they are needed to meet organizational requirements should be explicitly recognized within a clear mobility framework.

43. In accordance with the current mobility policy, OHRM will issue a compendium of the posts encumbered by participating staff members who have reached their post-occupancy limit. Staff members or managers may request a delay in the placement of a post on the compendium, where legitimate reasons relating to personal hardship or Organizational interests exist. Such requests would be reviewed by OHRM and granted in exceptional cases only. In certain special situations, staff members may also for "legitimate reasons" be exempted from rotation and/or have their rotation deferred for a specified period – normally for not more than one year. The Inspectors found that the above criteria have not been discussed nor established to determine when "legitimate reasons" might be applicable. In their view, this is one of the major weaknesses of the current scheme. With only a few months away from the beginning of mandatory rotation, in May 2007, OHRM has not so far even defined the criteria for what might constitute "legitimate reasons", either on organizational grounds or on personal grounds. Nor has it asked departments and offices to identify such cases, for example by defining what might constitute "specialist posts" not subject to mandatory rotation. The issue of mobility and the need to preserve certain highly specialized, location-specific functions is discussed later in this report in paragraph 66.

[11] Commission Decision of 29 September 1999.

44. The Inspectors believe that the primary responsibility for the definition of "non-rotational posts" should rest with the substantive management rather than with OHRM, as under the current policy. OHRM should primarily be responsible for developing the criteria for classifying posts as "non-rotational", and for preparing the related rules and procedures. Nonetheless, the authority to apply these rules should rest with substantive programme management, in close consultation with OHRM.

45. Another element of the current policy that confirms its mandatory nature is that staff members who do not express a preference for any assignment will be automatically reviewed by OHRM against functional posts commensurate with their competencies, qualifications, skills and experience. This further affirms the conflict of responsibilities between substantive programme management and OHRM, as stated above.

46. The Inspectors believe that while mandatory mobility could have a negative impact on staff motivation, voluntary mobility could make it impossible for the Organization to achieve its objectives, particularly in hardship duty stations. The staff survey shows that when given the option to choose among voluntary, mandatory or managed approaches, staff would prefer a managed mobility approach (51.7% of respondents), that is, mobility linked to organizational needs and to career development. This result shows their high level of maturity and commitment to the Organization. The Inspectors are also in favour of "managed" mobility. They see mobility as a responsibility to be shared by the Organization, the managers and the staff. It should be properly managed and linked to career development. It should also be promoted, to the extent possible, through voluntary schemes and attractive incentives.

47. Mandatory mobility would be the last resort only in very special cases and after careful evaluation of previous voluntary mobility initiatives. However, the Inspectors strongly believe that mandatory mobility should be considered in certain crucial areas of the Organization, in particular in sensitive posts. Mobility should also be used as a tool to improve and promote transparency in the administration of resources. Therefore, those posts, especially senior posts, involving the responsibility to administer considerable resources - for example, in procurement, finance and treasury - should be subject to special mandatory mobility requirements. Also, the Inspectors believe that posts mandated with oversight functions should be included under this mandatory approach. This issue has not been addressed by the current mobility policy.

D. Mobility as a managerial tool

48. Mobility should not be an end in itself.[12] The Inspectors believe that the importance of mobility rests in its value as a means to help the Organization achieve its objectives. Thus, ideally, mobility is an element of results-based management. It should provide the Organization with versatile, adaptable and motivated staff with the right profile. But the current policy has become an end in itself, with staff being required to move without any serious consideration given to their career development. It is important to note that the initiative for movement rests mainly with the staff and that managers cannot fully play their managerial role in this respect without support of the staff. Mobility should be a tool primarily for programme managers to better achieve expected results. If managers are to be held accountable for their performance and for accomplishing their objectives, they should be delegated enough authority to manage the resources under their supervision, including the main resource - their staff.

49. The Inspectors find that the staff perceive the current mobility policy merely as a bureaucratic exercise. Many staff members, at all levels within the Organization, see the mobility requirement primarily from a compliance perspective. In the view of the Inspectors, it should be a managerial

[12] A/55/253, annex III, para. 5(a).

tool forming part of results-based management (RBM). OHRM plays a pre-eminent role in the current mobility policy. It is to be the central coordinator of managed reassignment exercises for all Professional staff, Secretariat-wide, and for General Service staff at Headquarters. In cooperation with heads of department, it will also be responsible for the placement of staff who have reached their post-occupancy limit. Furthermore, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management will review and approve the proposed reassignments for all Professional staff and for General Service staff at Headquarters. Additionally, mobility programmes for General Service staff at offices away from Headquarters will be coordinated by their own local human resources offices.

50. The Inspectors believe, however, that giving OHRM a central responsibility for mobility contradicts the foundations of results-based management, which is intended to promote managerial flexibility in the use of resources. In its resolution 60/257 of 8 May 2006, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination to endorse the benchmarking framework proposed by JIU for implementing results-based management. On delegation of authority, benchmark 6 "Managers are empowered through adequate central support services and help-desks for human resources management" clearly defines the main functions of the central support services, OHRM included, as follows: provision of common administrative services; provision of advisory services, including through human resources help desks; access to management knowledge; and monitoring. The Inspectors strongly urge the Secretariat to strictly adhere to this piece of legislation in implementing the mobility policy.

51. In the context of RBM, heads of department/office should retain the authority over lateral transfers within their departments/offices, with policy advice and administrative assistance from OHRM in preparing the compendium and in helping the staff concerned to find the right matches. On the other hand, the Inspectors strongly believe that OHRM should be given the authority as a last resort in cases where both staff members and programme managers fail to do their part in implementing the mobility policy. Otherwise, there might be no mobility beyond the boundaries of "departmental silos". OHRM's automatic review and ultimate replacement of those staff members who do not express an interest in a lateral move when their occupancy limits are due should procedurally be the last step, if all other attempts have failed.

52. Although OHRM repeats the Secretary-General's commitment to implementing managed mobility, the Inspectors are convinced that the current policy is "mandatory" rather than "managed". Some of its elements confirm this: for instance, the provision on post-occupancy limits, and the lack of any apparent linkage between mobility and career development. The Inspectors strongly believe that managed mobility should be used as a managerial strategy consisting of staff movements for the purpose of developing a more versatile and skilful workforce to meet the present and future needs of the Organization. It would thus be clearly linked to career development. It should obviously also take into account the availability of resources. This three-fold definition emphasizes the intrinsic and unalienable linkage between these elements.

53. The Inspectors re-emphasize that, in the context of results-based management, the staff selection process must be a managerial rather than an administrative exercise. No one is in a better position than programme managers to determine the type of staff they need to achieve their performance targets. In the view of the Inspectors, staff selection should not be a support function but the responsibility of managers of substantive departments if they are to be held accountable for programme performance.

54. The Inspectors believe that the main responsibility for implementing mobility policies should rest primarily with programme managers, with OHRM playing a policy-setting, coordinating and advisory role, supporting and monitoring the implementation. This would be in line with related General Assembly resolutions, such as 51/226, which recognizes the role of OHRM as the

primary representative of the Secretary-General in establishing human resources policies and guidelines and supports its central policy authority.

E. Mobility and career development

55. The current mobility policy purports to link mobility to career development, as stated here:

> "Geographic mobility or service at a field mission or another agency, in the same or different duty station, for at least one year would be a pre-condition for promotion to the P-5 level and above. This would help ensure that by the time a staff member has reached the P-5 level, he/she has had a diverse background of increasingly responsible experiences, including management experience, and, therefore, a more integrated perspective and ability to contribute more fully to the Organization's work."[13]

56. In the view of the Inspectors, however, such an approach only establishes an eligibility requirement for promotion. It only vaguely takes into consideration the qualitative aspect of career development. Furthermore, it accords the same value to the so-called "across-the-corridor" mobility as it does to geographical mobility. The Inspectors insist that mobility across duty stations, especially mobility between headquarters duty stations and field duty stations should always have a higher value. Although the objective, clearly stated, is to develop "a diverse background of increasingly responsible experiences, including management experience", no indication is given as to how this could be achieved, or verified, as the current policy does not require the staff to acquire a diverse background but merely to "move". Such a partial approach limits the value of mobility. Understandably, therefore, many staff members perceive mobility as one more bureaucratic requirement to comply with, which benefits neither themselves nor the Organization.

57. The Inspectors believe that the current mobility policy is not properly linked to staff career development. In fact, despite the significant efforts made to enhance staff career development programmes and the establishment of Career Resource Centres in most major duty stations, including career development workshops addressing career planning (almost 2,000 staff participated in 2004-2005 in one-day career development workshops offered at Headquarters and Offices away from Headquarters), there is no effective managed career development within the Secretariat. In this connection, it is important to note that only 35.5% of the respondents to the survey "firmly believe" that the current mobility policy has any impact on their career development; whereas 57% see mobility as no more than a requirement for promotion. Additionally, 66% of the respondents consider mobility as a tool for improving and/or acquiring skills. Evidently, much remains to be done to properly link the mobility policy to the career development of staff.

58. In the view of the Inspectors, this is one of the most important issues that needs to be addressed. As the current policy places special emphasis on the movement of staff simply as a requirement to be complied with, mobility becomes an end in itself which contradicts the principle stated by the Secretary-General that "Mobility is not an end in itself", a principle that the Inspectors also fully subscribe to. They are convinced that mobility is a means that should serve the purpose of improving organizational efficiency through a well-thought-out career development strategy.

F. Mobility as a contractual requirement

59. The General Assembly in its resolution 55/258 recognized the requirement for mobility to be one of the essential elements of the contractual status of staff. The majority of persons applying

[13] iSeek. United Nations intranet.

for a post at the United Nations understand that they are applying for a position in a global organization that has operations in different geographical areas. Thus there is already an "implicit" understanding of potential mobility. However, this needs to be translated into specific mobility requirements that should be clearly reflected in the contractual relationship between the staff member and the Organization. One of the most important experiences gained in the managed reassignment programmes for P-2 staff, as pointed out by OHRM, is that integrating mobility as an "explicit" contractual element makes it easier to apply mobility policies subsequently.

60. The inherent differences in the many types of contract currently in place within the Secretariat form a major obstacle to implementing the mobility policy, since only a limited number of staff are eligible to participate in the mobility programme. The Inspectors share the views expressed by the Secretariat that many staff are currently ineligible to participate owing to their contractual status, which is based in large part on the source of funding for their posts. For example: whereas the majority of staff serving on field appointments are recruited under the 200 and 300 series of the Staff Regulations and Rules, the current mobility policy only applies to staff under the 100 series. The Secretary-General has already proposed to modify and reduce the number of types of contract, so as to harmonize the conditions of service to meet the needs of an increasingly field-based organization. Since these proposals are subject to approval by the General Assembly, the Inspectors consider it advisable to wait for the Assembly's decisions before implementing the next phase of the mobility policy.

61. The Inspectors would like to draw attention to the potential legal implications of further implementing the current policy. They fully share the concerns expressed by the Office of Legal Affairs that

> "... the way it [mobility policy] is proposed to be effected, i.e. through 'limited post occupancy' and mandatory movements before promotions, may not be the appropriate approach to implement the concept of mobility in the United Nations. Although Staff Regulation 1.2 (c) provides that '[s]taff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and to assignment by him or her to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations', and therefore technically, the Secretary-General would be authorised to introduce a mandatory mobility system, the proposed system appears to radically change the conditions of service of staff, and one cannot exclude that some of its elements could be successfully challenged before the United Nations Administrative Tribunal. The proposed system is also very cumbersome and might affect the successful delivery of programmes."[14]

62. The Inspectors therefore strongly recommend that the Secretary-General, before further embarking on the full implementation of the mobility policy, should continue to engage in extensive consultations so as to reach a viable solution that satisfies all the parties concerned. One possible solution could be to guarantee that the current contractual rights of incumbent staff members are respected while the mobility policy is being implemented. In other words, regardless of any future General Assembly decisions on contractual reform, staff members holding permanent contracts should be able to move across the Secretariat, funds and programmes without restrictions to their contractual status. At present, such staff members can move, but their permanent contracts are maintained only for a given period. They must then return to their original posts to avoid losing their contractual rights.

G. Mobility policies require flexibility in their conception and application

63. The Secretary-General in his report "Human resources management reform" said that there was "no single simple way to increase mobility in a complex organization like the United Nations: the diversity of the Organization's work rules out a straightforward rotation approach

[14] Letter from USG for Legal Affairs to the ASG for Human Resources Management dated 10 September 2001.

that is appropriate for a field-based organization".[15] He stressed that "mobility patterns would vary depending on the requirements of the job and the location".[16] Although this confirms the need for a flexible approach to mobility within the Secretariat, the Inspectors found no different mobility patterns for different jobs and/or locations and only in a few instances does the current mobility policy grant, partly and imprecisely, different mobility patterns such as for highly specialized jobs. Furthermore, 50.5 % of the respondents to the staff survey indicated that, in their opinion, the current mobility policy does not take into consideration the requirements of the job and/or the location. Another 28% of the respondents indicated that "they do not know" whether it does or not.

64. The Inspectors concur with the view of the Secretariat that given the complexity of its operations, it is imperative that the Organization take a flexible approach to implementing mobility. To gain experience in implementing the mobility policy, the Inspectors suggest that it might be advisable to start with areas where, comparatively speaking, the policy can be easily implemented. For instance, mobility within the same or similar occupational or professional groups. Of course, specific intra-departmental rotational plans could also be explored. Such schemes already exist within the Secretariat, such as the Rotation Policy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), where it is to be introduced in 2008, subject to the evolution of the mobility policy of the Secretariat. Based on the experiences gained from this exercise, mobility can then be expanded across functions, departments and between headquarters and field duty stations or even between agencies of the entire United Nations system.

65. Despite the diversity of activities carried out within the Secretariat and in addition to the proposal to develop intra-departmental rotation policies, the Inspectors believe that in certain common areas, such as administration, rotational programmes could be organized across different departments within a given duty station. These programmes should be coordinated locally, including for Professional staff. Such an approach would help reduce the administrative burden at Headquarters.

66. Sometimes the wide variety of activities within the Secretariat calls for highly specialized and location-specific skills. "A limited number of international Professional posts, which involve the performance of highly specialized, location-specific functions would be designated as non-rotational."[17] This issue was taken into consideration within the current mobility policy. OHRM is responsible for designating non-rotational posts in consultation with department heads. The Inspectors are also of the view that a flexible mobility policy should make allowances for such staff who are engaged in very specialized professions, whose mobility may be extremely difficult or ineffective for the Organization - for instance, cartographers or experts in different types of weapons. A list of non-rotational posts should be drawn up, clearly identifying them by specialization and location, to ensure that mobility management is transparent. OHRM stated in commenting on this report that "...the designation of certain occupational groups which will not be subject to the mobility policy is addressed in a draft administrative instruction which is currently under preparation".

67. The Inspectors believe that a flexible mobility policy should also take into consideration special cases such as staff with health problems, handicaps or special family conditions, and staff close to retirement age, etc. They therefore welcome the decision by OHRM to exempt from the mobility requirement those staff members who are within two years of retirement age.

68. The Inspectors further believe that the current mobility policy is not flexible enough to cope with the needs of a complex organization such as the United Nations, and that it does not treat certain types of staff equitably. For instance, in its definition of mobility, the Secretariat attaches

[15] A/55/253, annex III, para. 5.
[16] Ibid.
[17] iSeek, United Nations intranet.

the same value to mobility between different duty stations as to the so-called "mobility across the corridor" or mobility between different sections and work units. While recognizing that "mobility across the corridor" could, in certain cases, imply a change in the functions performed by a staff member, the Inspectors nevertheless wish to stress that the effort required to move geographically should always be recognized and be attributed higher value. "Mobility across the corridor" should not be used as a mechanism to take advantage of circumstances and to bypass the spirit of the mobility policy.

H. Mobility policy versus the need to preserve institutional memory

69. If mobility is not managed properly, it could lead to the Organization's losing its institutional memory. OIOS has already drawn attention to this problem. JIU shares the views included in its report on "Implementation of all provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/258 on human resources management", where OIOS pointed to the need for building into the mobility process mechanisms for knowledge transfer and continuity of expertise:

> "Strong efforts to institutionalize knowledge management practices, starting at the level of units, sections and divisions, should complement efforts to promote mobility. Such an approach would also avert potential resistance from programme managers who are reluctant to lose staff perceived as critical to programme delivery."[18]

70. As indicated by OHRM, there are several knowledge management initiatives that are being put in place within different areas of the Secretariat, such as:

- Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, led by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, which is developing a Secretariat knowledge-sharing agenda.
- CEB Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, which will be working on a knowledge-sharing strategy for the United Nations system.
- Pilot knowledge-sharing project of the United Nations Development Group which, combines four organizational knowledge-sharing models around the topic of HIV/AIDS.
- Electronic Content Management (ECM) platform, being developed by the Department of Management, which will incorporate (a) e-management, (b) knowledge sharing and (c) services to intergovernmental bodies.
- Knowledge management tool kit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which incorporates a methodology, as well as reporting and dissemination protocols, for after-action reviews, end-of-assignment reports, handover notes and practice surveys.

71. However, all of these initiatives are still either in the planning or the pilot phase. No comprehensive strategy is yet in place for effective knowledge management within the Secretariat, thus exacerbating the problem of preserving institutional memory during the ongoing mobility exercise. This issue has already been discussed in several papers. The following is taken from the summary of an OIOS report:

> "In the Secretariat, the knowledge-sharing culture is not always open, senior leadership support is limited, incentives and rewards are lacking, few organizational knowledge management strategies exist and there are minimal if any dedicated knowledge-sharing resources".[19]

72. Although certain technological improvements have taken place within different areas of the Secretariat, their benefits have been largely undermined by the lack of an effective global information management strategy, because staff in disparate locations and departments are unable

[18] "Implementation of all provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/258 on human resources management", A/57/726, para. 33.

[19] "Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration", E/AC.51/2006/2 (24 March 2006).

to share their knowledge. The Secretary-General himself has admitted that "Neither the culture nor the technology encourage or enable knowledge-sharing."[20] This again leads the Inspectors to conclude that it might be premature to proceed with increased mobility at this stage as this might only bring about greater inefficiency. They therefore caution against further implementation of the current mobility programme without assurances of the preservation of the Organization's institutional memory.

I. Financial implications

73. Implementing mobility has obvious financial implications. The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/221, requested the Secretary-General to include in his budget proposals provisions for implementing human resources management proposals. And in its resolution 59/266, it explicitly requested him to develop a strategic plan with indicators, benchmarks, time lines and clear criteria for implementing mobility policies and to report thereon, including in the report information on the financial implications, to the Assembly at its sixty-first session. Regrettably, however, this fundamental issue seems to have been completely overlooked. OHRM officials told the Inspectors that they did not expect a significant increase in current common staff costs due to increased mobility. They believed that the direct costs associated with it could be absorbed within the appropriation for common staff costs. And since most of the staff are expected to move within a given duty station, that there would be neither travel-related costs nor costs of removal. The Inspectors were also informed that the Office of Planning Programming, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA) had not been requested to provide any specific cost estimate for the mobility exercise.

74. The Inspectors wish to stress that the Secretary-General has explicitly stated that the goals of the mobility policy are "to ensure that the Organization is able to move people between functions, departments, occupational groups and duty stations in order to meet its operational requirements".[21] But the Inspectors wonder why OHRM based its assumption on mobility within a given duty station only. Having failed to find any evidence to support OHRM's assumption, the Inspectors believe that different cost estimates ought to have been prepared, taking into account different mobility scenarios.

75. Commenting on the draft report, OHRM argued that the resource implications for the proposals on mobility "are set out in the detailed Investing report which indicates that the projected costs will be incurred by additional staffing resources and common services requirements and expanded staff development and career support programmes to support mobility". It should be noted that the report mentioned by OHRM is not available at the time of finalizing this report. Furthermore, the Inspectors wish to point out that in spite of repeated requests to OHRM for cost estimates during their mission to New York, they received no answer.

76. Even though such cost estimates may be difficult to quantify because of the lack of baseline data, the Inspectors nonetheless believe that the implementation of mobility can be quantified. Recognizing the changing role of the Organization and the increasingly field-oriented nature of its mandates, the Inspectors assumed that at least 20% of annual lateral transfers of Professional staff will be between duty stations. OHRM, in its comments on the Inspectors' report, has not provided specific figures confirming or refuting the above estimate, stating that "...preliminary estimates indicate that 500 staff would potentially move under the managed mobility programme in 2007, of which only a fraction would change duty stations". But given that the General Assembly has requested that mobility across duty stations should have a higher value than mobility within a given duty station, the Inspectors are surprised to learn from the Secretariat that only "a fraction" of the staff would actually change duty stations. Assuming, therefore, an average cost of some

[20] "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide", A/60/692 (7 March 2006).
[21] A/55/253, para. 39

$50,000 per move, the additional common staff costs per biennium would be in the range of $15 to 20 million per biennium.[22]

77. It is important to note that this estimate does not, however, include additional costs associated to the implementation of mobility, which, although difficult to quantify, should not be neglected, such as:

- Additional resources needed by OHRM to manage mobility;
- Additional training requirements (which the Secretariat estimates at $20 million per biennium);
- Time required to induct staff members in their new activities; and
- Time required by staff and programme managers to comply with lengthy administrative procedures.

78. Since the staff selection system and reassignment programmes are resource intensive and operate on an organization-wide scale, increased mobility will require increased administrative resources. The Inspectors therefore believe that there is a need for a more flexible approach to the mobility exercise. They believe that, in particular, local multiple and flexible mechanisms should be developed for greater administrative efficiency.

J. Mobility as a means of sharing the hardship burden

79. All United Nations staff should have equitable access to opportunities in the Organization. Equally, with the exception of persons serving on non-rotational posts, they should all share the burden of service at hardship duty stations and challenging field missions. The Secretariat needs to develop a fair mobility scheme that recognizes the service rendered by staff serving in hardship duty stations by ensuring equal opportunities for all staff of the Organization. For instance, in 1982, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) instituted a formal rotation policy, based on the principle of burden sharing. To guarantee equality of treatment for its entire staff, all staff recruited on indefinite appointments are subject to rotation. One of the main concerns expressed by staff in the web-based survey is the fear of "getting stuck in the field". Seventy-two per cent of respondents considered this issue a major obstacle to the implementation of the current mobility policy. Once assigned to a hardship duty station, it can be difficult for a staff member to return. The Inspectors therefore believe that to promote real solidarity among staff, and to offer fair treatment to those already serving in difficult environments, the Secretariat should create specific rotational schemes.

80. They welcome the idea – included in the current mobility policy – of reducing post-occupancy limits for hardship duty stations. International staff serving in duty stations with a more severe hardship classification (C to E classifications) would have shorter post occupancy limits, and "priority consideration" would be given to these staff for subsequent reassignment. This would contribute to alleviating the problem of chronic vacancies at these locations. Post-occupancy limits for field missions would be determined by the respective managing departments in accordance with operational needs, security considerations, etc. In all cases, the limits would not exceed the current five or six years. In the view of the Inspectors, the above proposal does not sufficiently address staff members' major concern of "getting stuck in the field". They believe

[22] The population taken into consideration for this calculation is all Secretariat staff, irrespective of source of funding, in the Professional and higher categories under 100 series (4,565), as stated in the report of the Secretary-General, "Composition of the Secretariat" (A/60/310). The Inspectors assumed that all Professional staff would move over a period of five years, as foreseen under the current policy. They have also assumed for every year of the period that 10% of staff would not be subject to mobility due to retirement (staff within 2 years from retirement are not subject to mobility) and that 3% of staff might receive a promotion, implying that they are not required to move. The precise calculation, taking into consideration all the above factors, is USD 16 million of additional costs per biennium.

that it should be more specific and that, in particular, the terms "shorter occupancy limits" and "priority consideration" need to be clearly defined and quantified. The Inspectors welcome the flexibility offered to the managing departments to set their own post-occupancy limits. However, this could lead to inconsistent implementation of the policy, as different departments might decide on different post-occupancy limits for the same duty station. This is where OHRM can play a central advisory and coordinating role.

81. The Inspectors believe that many staff members would be willing to serve in hardship duty stations for a limited period of time if their onward assignments were to be assured, as this would alleviate their fear of "getting stuck in the field". To make this a reality, flexible intra-departmental or occupational rotation schemes would have to be introduced. In this respect, they welcome the OCHA initiative, even though it is planned only for OCHA international Professional staff who meet certain criteria. The intra-departmental rotation schemes should be open to qualified staff members serving in other departments within the Secretariat who are willing to serve on a temporary basis. This approach would increase the number of staff available to serve in hardship duty stations and would provide staff members with a unique opportunity to gain wider professional and personal experience.

K. Mobility of General Service staff

82. The Inspectors welcome most of the initiatives in the current mobility policy to increase and improve the mobility of General Service staff. These include:

- More G to P posts to be made available;
- Recognition of service in United Nations peace operations; and
- Enhancements in inter-agency mobility, whereby General Service staff members, moving from another agency within the duty station, or to a different duty station if they relocate themselves, are allowed to apply for and be appointed at the level of the new post instead of at the entry level.

83. The Inspectors welcome and support the agreement reached by SMCC at its XXVII session to request Member States to lift the 5% limit on General Service staff assignments to field missions. However, they would like to point to some artificial barriers to the promotion of G staff to P posts. For example, whereas General Service staff in the United Nations can apply for Professional posts only through the G to P examination, General Service staff from any other organization of the United Nations common system can apply as external candidates. This inconsistency also needs to be addressed within the mobility policy.

84. With regard to recognizing service in United Nations peace operations, the mobility policy states:

> "Staff going on assignment to field missions could maintain a lien on their post for a maximum of two years. Recognition of achievements and experience gained in peace operations as a positive 'job enrichment', by maintaining ongoing contact with the staff member during his/her release and creating an atmosphere of welcoming back upon return."[23]

The Inspectors are of the view that further elaboration is required before expanding the mobility scheme to the General Service staff.

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[23] iSeek, United Nations intranet.

L. Accountability for mobility

85. The current policy describes related accountability, for the three major actors involved in the mobility process: management, staff and OHRM, as follows:

> a) "Accountability of management. Heads of Departments and Offices would be responsible for putting into place systems which would support mobility, including standard operating procedures, staff training and succession planning, to ensure that the institutional capacity to deliver the programme is preserved. They would retain the authority to move staff laterally within their departments and would also be held accountable for their compliance with the mobility policy, in releasing and accepting staff members who are selected to be moved or need to be reassigned, including those placed by OHRM.... Managerial performance in human resources, including in meeting their responsibilities with respect to the mobility policy, would become an integral part of performance evaluation conducted by the Management Performance Board. Hence, the Board would be used as an instrument to enforcing managerial accountability at the highest level.
>
> b) Accountability of OHRM. In cases where staff members were unwilling or unable to move in accordance with the mobility policy, OHRM would have the authority to place those staff members. OHRM would work with departments to ensure that staff are mobile in their careers, in accordance with the mobility policy. OHRM's monitoring function would be strengthened in order to assist with the early identification of potential problems, so that they can be addressed in a timely fashion and recorded for further action, if warranted. Additionally, OHRM would advise Heads of Departments and Offices of the names of programme managers who have either blocked staff mobility or otherwise demonstrated a lack of commitment to the career development of individual staff members.... Heads of Departments and Offices would be expected to demonstrate that appropriate steps have been taken to address the issue with the individual manager, including in the context of the manager's performance appraisal. OHRM would include statistics on the number of occasions the Office has had to draw such matters to the attention of the Head of Department/Office in its annual monitoring report to the Secretary-General.
>
> c) Accountability of staff. Staff would be required to assume their responsibility to be mobile and for availing themselves of the career advancement and development opportunities the assumption of such a responsibility presents. Mobility can be achieved through actively applying for vacancies as well as participation in the managed mobility programme."[24]

86. In the above distribution of accountability shares, the Inspectors would like to highlight that whereas management and staff members are given some responsibilities, OHRM is only given authority without any clear accountability. The above description was taken from i-Seek, the United Nations intranet, and is the only information the Inspectors could find included in the current policy regarding mobility and its associated accountability. The Inspectors see that text as evidence that no clear understanding of the accountability concept exists. Furthermore, they find no justification for the lack of accountability assigned to OHRM in view of the major role it has to play in implementing mobility.

M. Mobility and administration of justice

87. In successive resolutions, notably, 55/258, 57/305 and 59/266, the General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to develop further criteria for mobility to maximize its benefits for the Organization and to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all staff and to avoid its possible abuse as an instrument of coercion against staff, taking into account job security in the Organization and other relevant factors.

88. The results of the staff survey reflect both a lack of knowledge of the mechanisms available (39.8%) and mistrust over the adequacy of current mechanisms to cope with the issues related to mobility (50.1%). The Inspectors believe that the current system of administration of justice is

[24] iSeek, United Nations intranet, Management position paper on mobility prepared for discussion at the 27th session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee (SMCC) entitled "Part III: Increasing Mobility".

slow and cumbersome, and inadequate for coping with increased mobility. New mechanisms should be developed, at the local level, for resolving conflicts quickly. Such mechanisms could take the form of joint panels formed by management and staff representatives, with strict deadlines set for accomplishing their tasks. Commenting on this report, OHRM stated as follows:

> "The mechanisms to deal with conflict resolution in the Secretariat are set out in ST/IC/2004/4. As agreed at SMCC-XXVII, a focal point will be established in OHRM so that heads of staff councils and staff unions could report irregularities or concerns regarding the implementation of the mobility policy. Pending consideration of the recommendations of the Redesign Panel, the General Assembly in resolution 59/283 introduced a number of interim measures to improve the justice system in the United Nations".

89. The independent experts of the Redesign Panel appointed by the Secretary-General at the request of the General Assembly to review and redesign the internal justice system recently further confirmed the inadequacy of the administration of justice in the Organization. They concluded that the United Nations does not have an efficient, effective, independent and well-resourced internal justice system, and that a fundamental overhaul of the internal justice system of the Organization is essential for successfully managing the reform. The conclusions of the Panel coincide with the views of the Inspectors and with the views set out in a previous JIU report:

> "the system for administration of justice at the United Nations is slow, costly and cumbersome. It also appears to be, in several significant ways, far less effective than it could or should be."[25]

N. Mobility as a motivational element

90. The Inspectors are convinced that well-designed mobility schemes can be a powerful motivational tool for both management and staff. The key to designing such schemes lies in matching the needs of the Organization with the identified needs and skills of staff. These staff needs and skills should further be taken into account when developing a mobility policy that could act as a strong motivational element. In this respect, the web-based staff survey can be of some help to OHRM to further broaden its views on mobility and to identify specific needs of the staff members and the importance that they attach to the mobility policy. Sixty per cent of respondents to the survey were not satisfied with the current policy (of these, 27.5% said that the current policy was of "little" encouragement to them; and 32.5% indicated that it is "not at all" encouraging). These results show that the Secretariat's information campaign on mobility has contributed little to improving staff motivation and perceptions of the implementation of mobility. Some further results and conclusions of the survey are set out below.

O. Mobility and work/life issues

91. The Inspectors believe that the Secretariat is well aware of most of the concerns of the staff. However, it needs to do much more to properly address these concerns through drawing up concrete and meaningful action plans. The survey results show that respondents are not informed of any specific measures taken or planned to improve life-work conditions (e.g. spouse employment, security, working environment) as an incentive to mobility: 73.8 % of respondents consider that they have not enough information (of which 25.8% stated "little" information and 48% "no information at all"). The main concerns expressed in the responses, and in order of importance, are as follows:

- "getting stuck in the field" (48%);
- work-life . ues (48%);
- health and security (48%);

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[25] "Administration of Justice at the United Nations", JIU/REP/2000/1.

- spouse employment (46%);
- assurance of the possibility of returning to the original duty station (46%);
- lack of appropriate training (39%);
- legal residency restrictions of staff members and dependants (33%).

92. The analysis of the comments received through the survey points to great concern related to work/life issues. Most of the respondents believe that the current mobility policy does not properly address questions related to the impact of mobility in their family lives and in the education of their children. The Inspectors also found the current policy to be vague in this regard. Staff members moving to a new duty station are offered little support to find schools, housing, etc. Furthermore, they have to rely on the understanding of their direct supervisors to allow them the necessary time to settle into their new environment. OHRM has already embarked on several initiatives to address work and life issues, particularly regarding spouse employment. These include a setting up a Spouse Support Programme (in 2004), creating databases and networks at many duty stations, and appointing focal points for spouse employment at all major duty stations. OHRM has also introduced semi-annual "Job Search Workshops" to assist spouses in finding employment in both a United Nations and non-United Nations context, and developing an information network. To date, five workshops have been conducted with 80 spouses participating. The Inspectors nevertheless believe that much more needs to be done. For example:

- Increasing and improving the information already available through the human resources office or staff counselors to staff members when they move to a new place;
- Reaching preferential agreements with schools, as well as with real estate agencies which could provide the necessary services to make relocation easier.

93. The Inspectors support the initiative of the Secretariat, which

> "... has maintained its membership with the Permits Foundation, an association of international companies working together to encourage Governments to relax work permit regulations in order to assist with expatriate spouse employment. Recognizing that the requirement to renounce permanent resident status as a condition of employment with the United Nations creates major obstacles for mobility, the Secretary-General has requested the General Assembly in the 61st session to reconsider this requirement in order to provide a more secure basis for their families to remain in that country while the staff member is required to serve in another duty station or field operation."[26]

P. Mobility across the United Nations system

94. In November 2005, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) issued the Inter-Agency Mobility Accord. The Accord replaces the Inter-organization agreement concerning transfer, secondment or loan of staff among the organizations applying the United Nations common system of salaries and allowances. It was drawn up at the common system level by the Human Resources Network. The Inspectors welcome this initiative as a major development towards the enhancement of staff mobility across the United Nations common system and express their readiness to conduct another review on inter-agency mobility throughout the system at a later date.

95. The Inspectors believe that the staff of the United Nations system should have the opportunity to move, as *internal* candidates, throughout the Secretariat and agencies, and the various funds and programmes. This would not only increase the career opportunities but, even more importantly, bring to the system fresh experiences and knowledge. The status of the candidates for inter-agency mobility, including between United Nations funds and programmes, and including civilian staff for peace operations, remains an important question. Who is and who should be

[26] Information included in the Secretariat's comments on this report.

considered as internal and external candidates for recruitment, transfer and promotion in the various parts of the United Nations system? This could be the subject of further work by JIU.